PC GAMES

The only PC games mag you'll ever need – All the Christmas releases reviewed and rated!

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January 1995
6
Look at the choppers on that!

Special Offer!
Half-price INFERNO at
Dixons
See page 49!

Under a Killing Moon

The finished *game* reviewed inside!

Ecstatica

We sink our teeth into Psygnosis' stunning answer to Alone In The Dark!

CD-ROM EDITION!

A sumptuous festive feast of top quality playable demos!

NO CD? ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT!

It's a Winter Wonderland!
All the big Christmas games reviewed!

The Shape of Things to Come!
Massive preview of *every* game coming your way in '95!

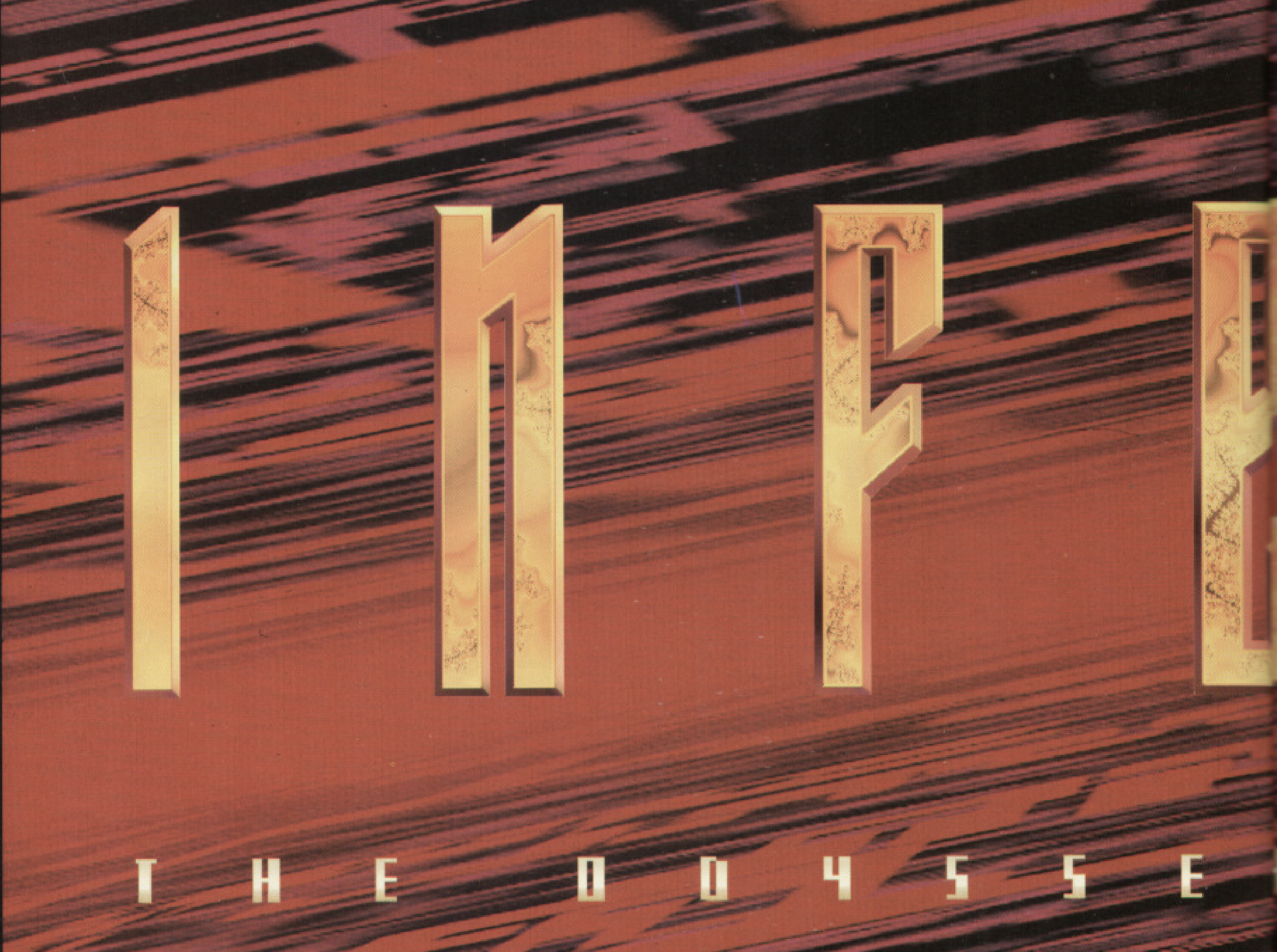
When is a PC *not* a PC?
For the answer to this riddle, turn to page 23...

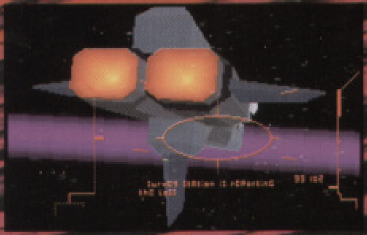
DIGITAL IM

CD-ROM MAGAZINE Recommended

"Inferno is a huge game, encompassing deep-space & planetary combat, with all the features of a top notch flight sim, but the feel & playability of an arcade game." C&VG 93%

" Innovative, engrossing and massively huge!" PC Review





OCEAN SOFTWARE PRESENTS INFERNO THE ODYSSEY CONTINUES™ A SCIENCE FICTION GAME EXPERIENCE OF ENORMOUS DEPTH AND AWESOME GRAPHICS AVAILABLE FOR PC & PC CD-ROM. GAME CONCEPT, DESIGN & PROGRAMMING BY DIGITAL IMAGE DESIGN. MUSIC BY A.S.F. PRODUCED BY OCEAN SOFTWARE LIMITED. © 1994 OCEAN SOFTWARE LIMITED. INFERNO THE ODYSSEY CONTINUES™ & TRACKING THE FUTURE™ ARE TRADEMARKS OF OCEAN SOFTWARE LIMITED.

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MAGE DESIGN

"Inferno is an Epic! - perfect game structure combine with fast action & amazing attention to detail." PC Home 91%

"In the end Inferno does turn out to be the scorcher of a game that has been promised..." the graphics are just superb." CD-ROM User

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

RNO

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Simply send in this page of the advert together with your name and address + a cheque or a postal order for £2.50 made payable to Ocean Software Ltd. to cover postage and packing. In return we will send you a stunning video that will show you Inferno in all its blazing glory + exclusive behind the scenes footage. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Mark your envelope Inferno Video Offer.

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OCEAN CD ROM

tracking the future

Welcome to another fantastic issue of PC GAMES... although it's not *quite* as fantastic as we hoped it'd be! If you recall last issue's Next Month page, you'll remember that we intended to have a complete game called Tube on our coverdisks, written specially for you by our chums at Bullfrog.

Sadly, we've suffered the same problem that a lot of software companies do around this time of year — namely, slippage. Bullfrog have been so busy finishing off Magic Carpet and getting it ready for release, that they just couldn't complete Tube in time to hit out tight coverdisk duplication deadlines.

But never fear — Bullfrog are confident that they'll have it ready in time for our next issue. Just think of it as a late Christmas present. Trust us (or rather, trust the ace geezers at Bullfrog) — it'll be well worth the wait.

In the meantime, we'll sure you'll agree that there's plenty to keep you amused on the coverdisks, whether you've got the HD or CD issue of PC GAMES.

Have a good Christmas, and we'll see you fit and well in the New Year!

David Upchurch,
Editor.

6 Disks!

No, buyers of the CD-ROM issue, that's not a shiny frisbee. And no, buyers of the HD issue, those aren't plastic mug mats. They're your coverdisks — come this way if you want to know how to use them...

16 News

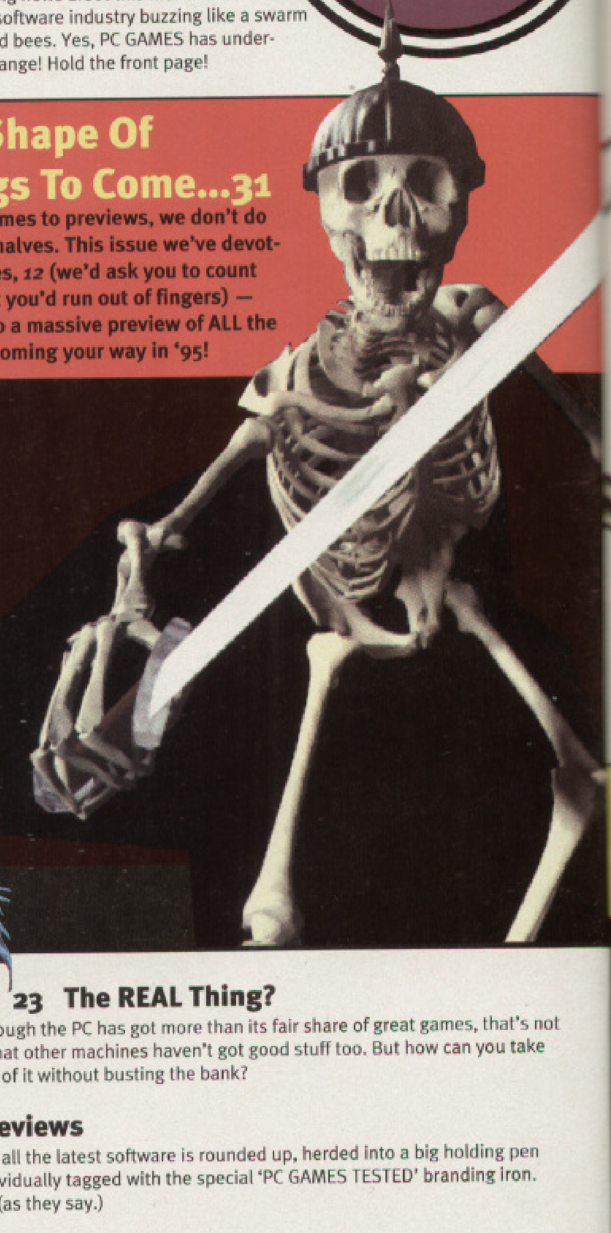
There's some big news afoot this month that has got the whole software industry buzzing like a swarm of honey-crazed bees. Yes, PC GAMES has undergone a staff change! Hold the front page!

WIN!

There are some great prizes to be won in our smashing Christmas compo! Turn to page 28 and enter NOW!

The Shape Of Things To Come...31

When it comes to previews, we don't do things by halves. This issue we've devoted 12 — yes, *12* (we'd ask you to count 'em, but you'd run out of fingers) — pages to a massive preview of ALL the games coming your way in '95!



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23 The REAL Thing?

Although the PC has got more than its fair share of great games, that's not to say that other machines haven't got good stuff too. But how can you take advantage of it without busting the bank?

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This is where all the latest software is rounded up, herded into a big holding pen and then individually tagged with the special 'PC GAMES TESTED' branding iron. Yeee-haaaa! (as they say.)

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Five minutes, girls! Dream Web and Soccer Kid take their places on the podium as Dean prepares to give them the final once-over.

94 Budget Reviews

An indispensible guide about what to do with the last few pounds of your precious Christmas money.

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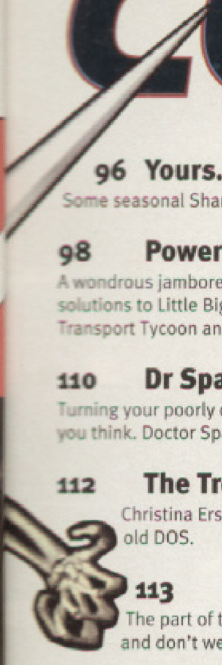

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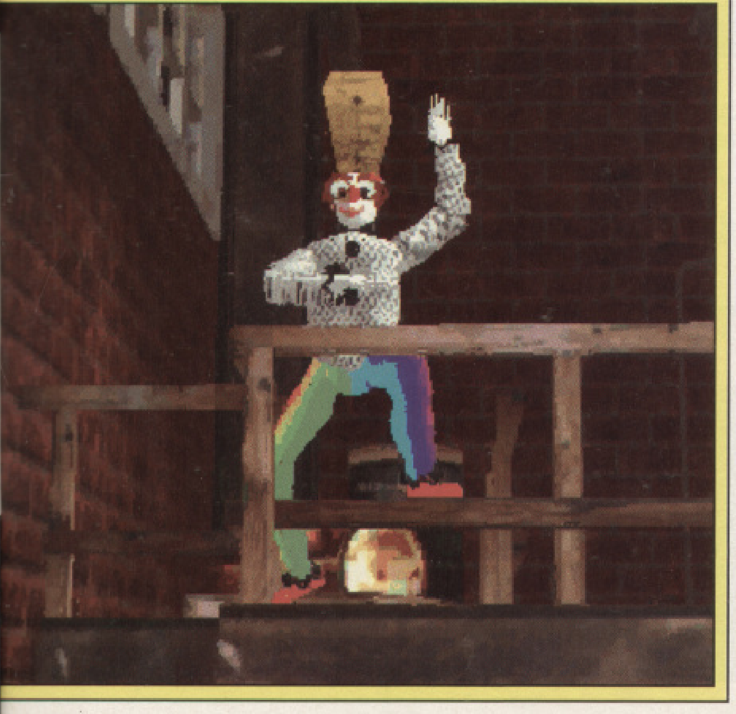
At *last*! We've been waiting for this longer than — ooh, something we've had to wait a very long time for. But now it's here and its finally finished. But is it any *good*? There's only one way to find out...



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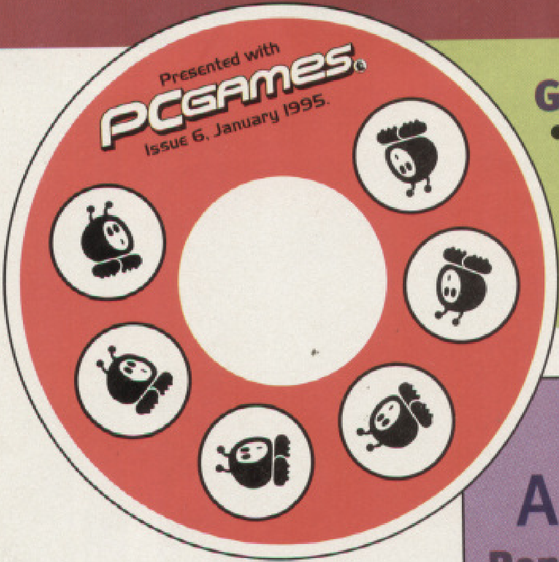
Disks!

You are in a deep, dark cavern. There are exits: north and east. You see a mouldy copy of PC GAMES lying on the floor. If it has two high-density disks on the cover, go to page 11. If it has a CD-ROM on the cover, got to page 6...

You can use this dress as a disguise.

DISKS!

You can tell that Christmas is coming — just look at all the lovely prezzies we've got for you on this month's disks! HD owners get to sample the exquisite delights of Flight Of The Amazon Queen and All New World Of Lemmings. CD owners, on the other hand, get all that PLUS playable demos of Magic Carpet, Innocent Until Caught 2, Novastorm, NASCAR Racing, Cyberwar, Delta V... the list goes on and on. Go and get stuck in.



Getting started...

- **If you've got the HD Disk Edition of PC GAMES, then turn to page 11 to find out how to use them RIGHT NOW!**
- **If you're still reading, then I guess you've got the CD-ROM Edition of PC GAMES. To load or install each demo, first place the CoverCD in your CD-ROM drive and log onto it by typing D:, E:, or whatever.**

Now type PCGAMES. A menu will appear — you select a demo by highlighting it with the up/down cursor keys and hitting SPACE. Any special instructions are given in the 'Loading The Game...' sections below.

System Requirements!

Most of these demos will run quite happily on a 386 PC (minimum), with VGA, 4Mb of RAM, DOS 5.0 or greater, and a mouse.

However, please note that All New World Of Lemmings requires SVGA, Cyberwar requires a double-speed CD-ROM drive, and Total Distortion requires SVGA and Windows 3.1.

Flight of the Amazon Queen

Renegade

Renegade's long awaited graphic adventure is almost upon us, so in celebration we have the EXCLUSIVE non-talking demo of the game for your perusal. In this demo you play Joe King, the hero of the game, as he tries to escape from a locked hotel room.

Loading The Game...

Just select FLIGHT OF THE AMAZON QUEEN from the CoverCD menu! Easy-blummin'-peasy!

Game Controls

This is the same as the floppy demo so, for full instructions on how to play, turn to page 12

Novastorm

Psygnosis

If you were lucky enough to play Microcosm when it was released, you'll already know that the Psygnosis boys and girls are capable of some pretty stunning graphics. And this reputation will doubtless be reinforced when you play this fully-playable demo of Novastorm shows.

The demo is simple enough — just get from one end of the trench to the other, taking out just about everything you can. Along the way you'll find all manner of pick-ups and extra weapons, which can be selected at any point. One word of warning, however — watch the floor and walls at all times, as colliding with them will take up some of your precious shield energy. Otherwise, have fun!

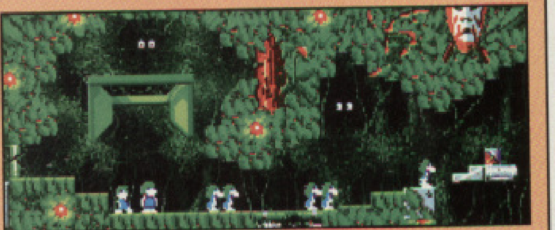
Loading The Game...

Simply select NOVASTORM from the CoverCD menu and you're away!

How To Play

The game controls are all definable within the game, but for those who want to get up and go:

A	Up
Z	Down
<	Left
>	Right
SPACE	Fire weapon
ENTER	Select highlighted weapon.



All New World Of Lemmings

Psygnosis

The little green guys are back, and once again you have to try and get them to the exit — before they hurt themselves off a wall, onto spikes or down holes!

Loading The Game...

Select LEMMINGS 3 from the CoverCD menu! It's as easy as that!

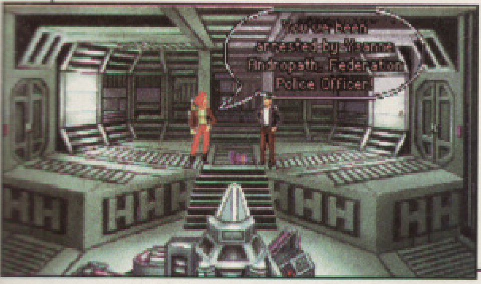
Game Controls

This is the same as the floppy demo so, for full instructions on how to play, turn to page 12

Innocent Until Caught 2: Presumed Guilty

Psygnosis

Hold it right there or the Freisian gets it between the horns!


You've been arrested by Ysanne Andropath, Federation Police Officer!

Those kind gents at Divide By Zero return very soon with the follow up to their marvellous Innocent Until Caught, and they've kindly provided us with an EXCLUSIVE playable demo of it!

Innocent Until Caught 2: Presumed Guilty tells the tale of the interstellar master thief Jack T. Ladd, who has been captured by the Federation bounty hunter Ysanne Andropath. As in the full game, the player can play the game from the viewpoint of either the male character or the female character. The tasks that each character must complete are described at the beginning of the demo.

Loading The Game...

This demo needs to be installed to and run from the hard disk, and you'll need about 10Mb spare for it. Don't worry — just select INNOCENT UNTIL CAUGHT 2 from the CoverCD menu and we'll do most of the hard work for you.

Once it's installed, you'll need to set up the game to work with your sound settings — click on the relevant boxes to do this. Now log onto the game directory, which is **C:\GUILTY** by default, and then type **GUILTY** to run the game.

Game Controls

The game is played with the mouse or cursor keys. The game screen is laid out in typical graphic adventure fashion, with the top-half the graphic window and the bottom-half your inventory and control icons.

The mouse can be in any of six modes — TAKE, USE, MOVE, EXAMINE, TALK and HOLD — and these can be cycled through by clicking the right mouse button. Alternatively, you can switch between them by clicking on the relevant control icons, or by using the keyboard.

Keyboard Controls

SPACE	Game control menu
Cursor Keys	Moves pointer
RETURN	Simulates left mouse button
TAB	Simulates right mouse button
ESC	Skip cutscenes
-/=	Scroll inventory up/down
[/]	Snap inventory to top/bottom
A	Arrange inventory
M	Move mode
H	Take mode
U	Use mode
L	Look mode
T	Talk mode
O	Operate current object held
ALT+J	Calibrate joystick
CTRL+J	Joystick mode
CTRL+M	Mouse mode
F1	Pause game
F8/CTRL+X	Quit game

Delta V

US Gold

Delta V is a race game set in some of the most dangerous trenches seen since the first Death Star run, and in this demo from US Gold you get to sample one of them. In your lone fighter, you must zoom down the trench, avoiding all the obstacles in front of you, while taking out just about everything else on-screen. Have fun!

Loading The Game...

Select DELTA V from the CoverCD menu and, er, that's it.

Game Controls

Delta V can be played with either the mouse or keyboard, using the cursor keys to replace the mouse directions.

ERCC: 03:35:89
ALPHA: III
DESTROY: 0 / 5
LASERS
PHOTON TORPEDO
ACQUIRING
ACQUIRING

With the mouse, the left mouse button fires your cannons and the right mouse button fires homing missiles when you are given a lock on an enemy plane.

In keyboard mode, the Space bar and ENTER key do the same respective jobs. If you find the game is running too slow on your machine, then change the system options on the menu at the start of the dem

Xmas Lemmings

Psygnosis

Okay, so you've played the All New World Of Lemmings demo, and it's great. But no doubt some of you still fondly remember when the Lemmings used to be small. Well, those people will doubtless be delighted with this special fully-playable four-level demo, which sees our little friends in festive mode. And what could be better at this time of year?

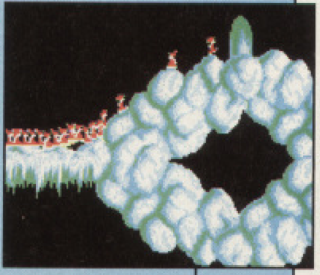
Loading The Game...

This demo needs to be installed to your hard disk before you run it — just select XMAS LEMMINGS from the CoverCD menu to do this. When prompted for the 'Install From' directory, enter **D:\XMAS**, where **D** indicates your CD-ROM drive letter. Follow the on-screen instructions to play the game.

Game Controls

Oh come on, if you haven't played Lemmings before, then you are in one hell of a minority. The objective is simple: the Lemmings appear at one end of the screen, and have to be guided to the exit at the other end of the screen, by way of a set of control icons at the bottom of the screen.

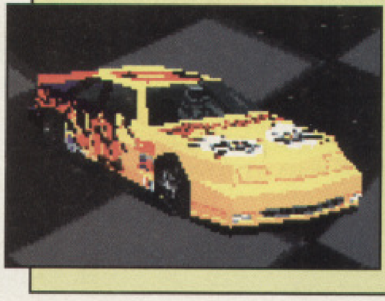
By clicking on one of icon, and then on a Lemming, you can give them special abilities, such as digging, bridge building or climbing. You only have a certain number of these abilities to give away, so the trick is to figure out how best to use them to get through each level.



NASCAR Racing

Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Could this be the ultimate in racing games? Forget the Indy 500, NASCAR Racing is where the action really is, as this fully-playable demo clearly shows. You are given enough fuel to complete two complete laps of Talledega, and you're running solo so you're just out for the best lap times you can possible get. It's easy as pie to play, so get going!



Loading The Game...

This demo is another one that must be installed onto your hard disk before you can run it — select NASCAR Racing from the CoverCD menu to do this. Now log onto the **C:\NASDEMO** directory, and then type in **NASDEMO -I** to start playing.

Game Controls

The controls couldn't be more straightforward. Use the left and right cursor keys to steer your car, the up cursor key to accelerate and the down cursor key to brake. In this demo, the gears are on automatic, so you don't have to worry about them. What could be easier?

Creature Shock

Virgin

Virgin's rendered epic is nearing completion at last, and it's looking like it's going to be a scorcher – and here's a fully playable segment of the game for you to goggle at! The aim is simple enough – just work your way through the tunnels inside a huge organic asteroid, where only moments before you detected signs of life...

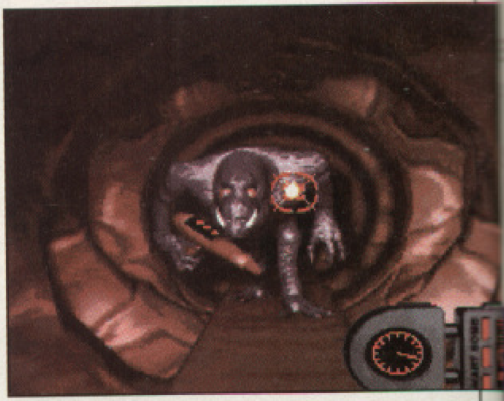
How To Load

The demo runs direct from the CD, so just select CREATURE SHOCK from the CoverCD menu to start playing.

Game Controls

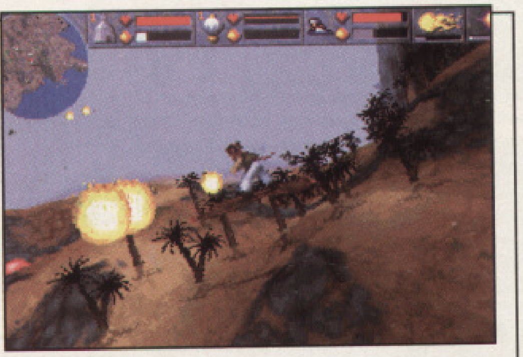
The game is controlled with the mouse, and the mouse pointer changes on-screen to show the different controls. Moving the mouse to the top of the screen and clicking with the left mouse button moves you forward, moving it to the left of the screen and clicking with the mouse button moves you left, and so on.

The Heads-Up Display can be in any of three modes to aid you in your quest. The basic, standard mode shows the direction pointer on screen. Pressing the Space bar brings up Targetting Mode, for when in combat, and clicking with the right mouse button enters Shield mode.



Magic Carpet

Bullfrog



Bullfrog's 3D extravaganza is finally ready, and thanks to us you now have a chance to play it – free of charge! You are on a Magic Carpet, as the title suggests, and have to use your magic to take over an area of the globe. To do this, you need to collect magic balls and build a fortress, all the time looking out for dragons, bees and other would-be rulers.

Loading The Game...

IMPORTANT! Before trying to install the Magic Carpet demo, log onto your hard disk and type **CD **. Now log onto the CoverCD and select MAGIC CARPET from the CoverCD to install it onto your hard disk. Finally, log onto the **C:\PCDEMO** directory and type **CARPET** to start playing.

Game Controls

The game is controlled with the mouse and keyboard. The mouse controls the direction your carpet points in, with the left and right mouse buttons firing different spells. The keyboard is used for most other controls.

Keyboard Controls

		1-3	Change spell on left mouse button
		Spacebar	Rebirth
Cursor Up	Move forwards	P	Pause
Cursor Down	Move backward	F1	Brings up the help menu.
Cursor Left	Move left		
Cursor Right	Move right	SHIFT+Q	Quit

Cyberwar

SCI

If you don't think that this isone of the most impressive-looking demos you've ever seen, then you obviously need your eyesight tested. Sales Curve Interactive have spent a very long time on the sequel to The Lawnmower Man, and it really shows.

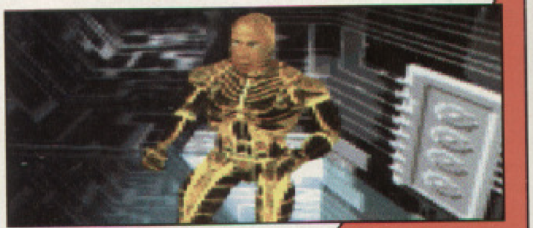
In this absolutely enormous demo, you have a choice of an interactive race through a tunnel called Cyberboogie, or a non-interactive look at other aspects of the game.

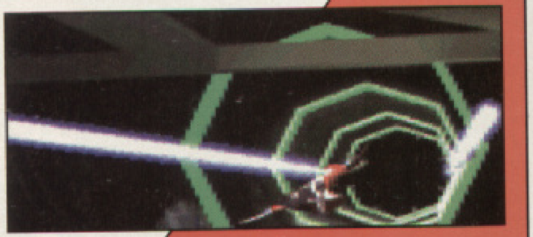
Loading The Game...

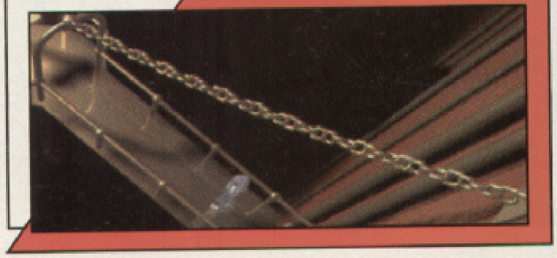
Select CYBERWAR from the CoverCD menu, and you're one step away from watching something amazing.

Game Controls

The game is controlled with the cursor keys, pressing in the appropriate direction for each cutscene in the tunnel. For example, if you are heading towards a wall and the tunnel bends right, then you press right to get to the next tunnel segment. Remember that your Cybersteed is like a plane, in that pressing down makes you go up, and vice versa!







Dawn Patrol

Empire Software

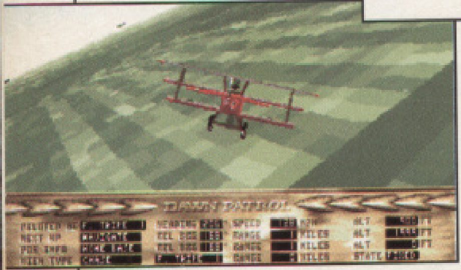
Rowan Software have been perfecting their SVGA graphic engine for quite some time, and the results are outstanding – as you'll agree once you play this demo of Dawn Patrol, their latest and greatest flight simulator.

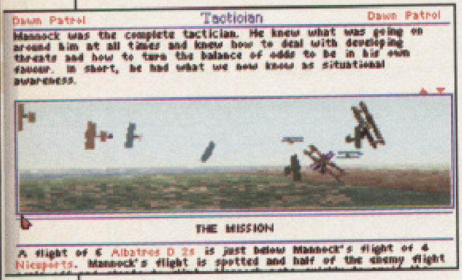
Loading The Game...

Select DAWN PATROL from the CoverCD menu – the demo will now install to your hard disk. Once it's finished, all you need to do is to log onto the **C:\PATROL** and type **PATROL** to get started.

Game Controls

It's a standard flight simulator as far as controls go, in which the cursor keys point the aircraft and the Space bar fires your cannons. For a complete breakdown of the controls, as well as all sorts of other information, have a play with the interactive book that forms part of the demo.



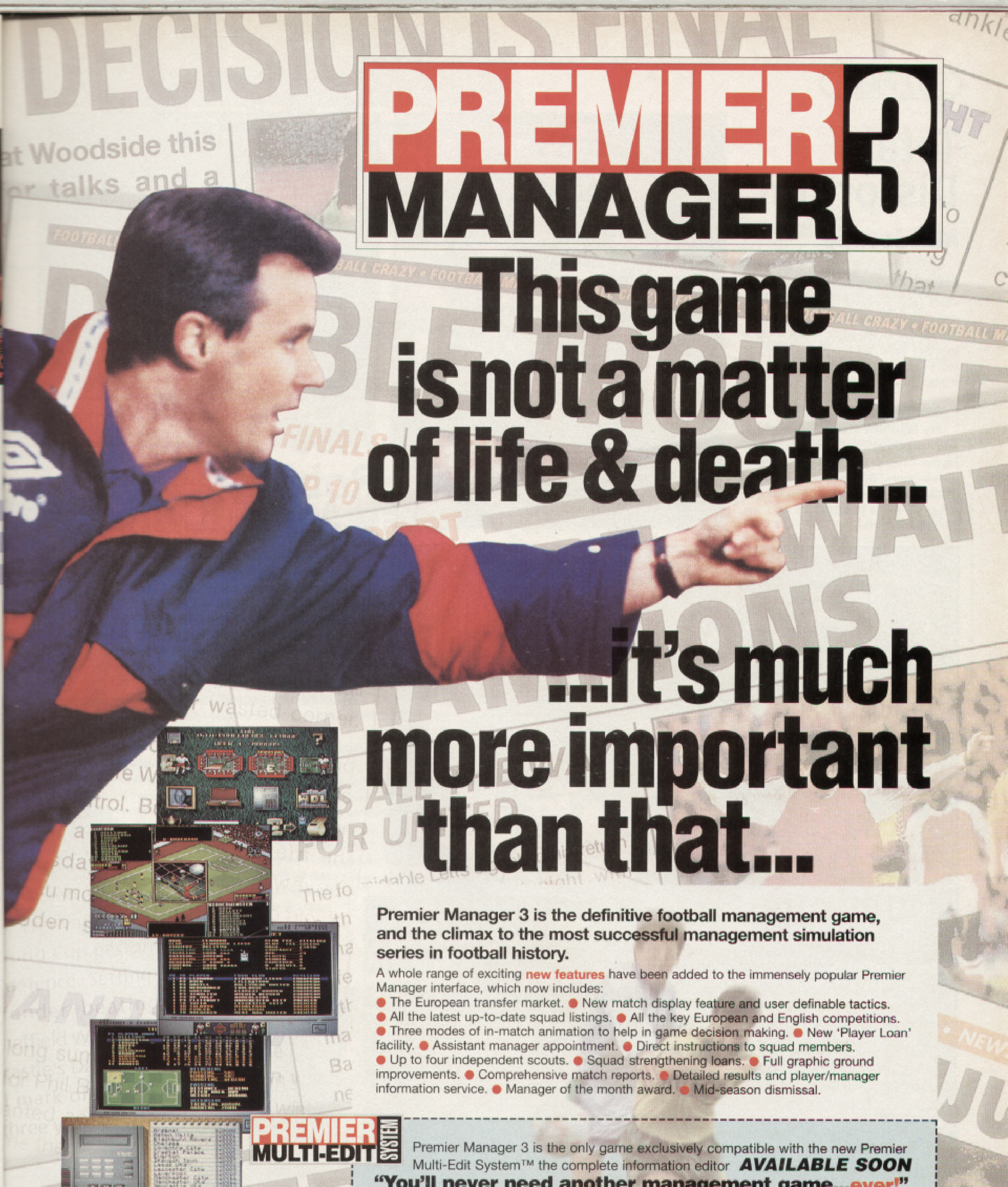


Dawn Patrol Tactician Dawn Patrol

Mannock was the complete tactician. He knew what was going on around him at all times and knew how to deal with developing threats and how to turn the balance of odds to be in his own favour. In short, he had what we now know as situational awareness.

THE MISSION

A flight of 6 Albatros D 2s is just below Mannock's flight of 4 Nieuports. Mannock's flight is spotted and half of the enemy flight



PREMIER MANAGER 3

This game is not a matter of life & death...

...it's much more important than that...

Premier Manager 3 is the definitive football management game, and the climax to the most successful management simulation series in football history.

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Gremlin INTERACTIVE

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Tel: (0114) 275 3423.

Total Distortion

Mindscape

This has to be one of the strangest ideas for a multimedia adventure game yet. You are a rock video producer trapped in another dimension, and you have to use your production skills to escape your trap and return to your own world. It's a veritable festival of sound and vision, as this rolling demo clearly shows.

Loading The Game...

The demo runs from Windows, so boot your version of Windows, select RUN from the File menu, then go into the **TD_DEMO** directory on your CD-ROM drive. Click on **INSTALL.EXE** and, once it's finished doing its thing, click on the **TD DEMO** icon. After that, just sit back and enjoy.

Hell

GameTek

Unfortunately, a gremlin removed the instructions for our Hell rolling demo, so just to keep everyone happy all of the time, here are those instructions in full. If you missed last month's CD, we're running the demo this month too. Hooray!

Loading The Demo...

Hell needs to install to your hard disk, and you'll need 26Mb free to hold it. If you've got that, select HELL for the CoverCD menu and then follow the on-screen prompts. Note that you must have a Sound Blaster or 100%-compatible soundcard fitted to hear sound, and it must be set to PORT 220, IRQ 5 and DMA 1.

Rise Of The Robots

Mirage

It's had more front covers than Dave's had hot dinners. It's been in development for quite a long time. An interior designer has worked on the background graphics. It can only be Rise Of The Robots, the stunning rendered beat-'em-up that has to be seen to be believed. Here's your chance to go one-on-one with a friend, for free!

Loading The Game...

Select RISE OF THE ROBOTS from the CoverCD menu, and then follow the on-screen directions.

Game Controls

It's a beat-'em-up, controlled by player-defined keys, mouse, joystick or any combination of the three. All you need to do is cause as much damage to the opposition as possible. The best way to do this is to hold down the Fire button when making your move to generate more power in the attack, as indicated by a power bar at the top of the screen.

Dominus

US Gold

US Gold are really going on the offensive when it comes to fantasy wargames, and Dominus could well be the best one yet. Take on the might of an Orc attack in this completely playable slice of tactical pie.

Loading The Game...

This demo needs to be installed onto your hard disk (you'll need about 20Mb spare). Select DOMINUS from the CoverCD menu to get going. If you have problems, return to the **C:\** prompt and enter:

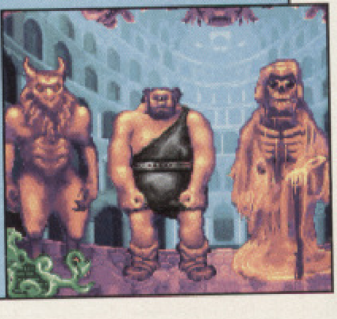
MD DOMINUS (to make a directory called DOMINUS), then enter:

XCOPY D:\DOMINUS\*.* C:\DOMINUS /S /V /W

The Dominus demo will be smoothly installed onto your hard disk. Type **DOM** when in the **C:\DOMINUS** directory to start the demo.

Game Controls

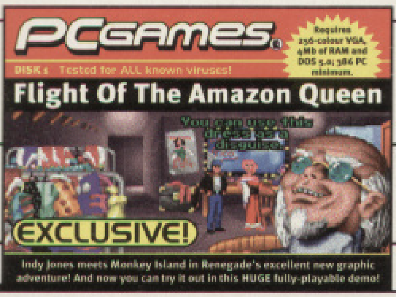
The game is controlled with the mouse or cursor keys, and is icon driven for ease of use. Almost everything graphic can be clicked on, such as the members of your council who sit before you at the start of the game. Clicking on each of these reveals a text menu of the services they provide. All of the icons are self-explanatory.



DISKS!

Another fun-packed floppy festival this month, as PC GAMES proudly brings you an exclusive playable demo of Renegade's Flight Of The Amazon Queen and a mammoth six-level slice of Psygnosis' All New World Of Lemmings!

Loading Your Coverdisk...



PCGAMES

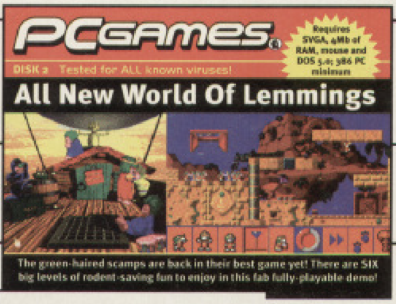
Requires 256-colour VGA, 4Mb of RAM and DOS 5.0; 386 PC minimum.

DISK 1 Tested for ALL known viruses!

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

EXCLUSIVE!

Indy Jones meets Monkey Island in Renegade's excellent new graphic adventure! And now you can try it out in this HUGE fully-playable demo!



PCGAMES

Requires SVGA, 4Mb of RAM, mouse and DOS 5.0; 386 PC minimum

DISK 2 Tested for ALL known viruses!

All New World Of Lemmings

The green-haired scamps are back in their best game yet! There are SIX big levels of rodent-saving fun to enjoy in this fab fully-playable demo!

1 It doesn't get any easier than this. First carefully remove your PC GAMES HDs from the cover of the mag and then release them from their cellophane prison. Now insert the disk of your choice into your drive.

2 Type **A:** (or **B:**, depending on the drive type) and then press the RETURN key to log onto your lavishly-crafted PC GAMES disk.

3 Type the legend **PCG** and press the RETURN key. Choose the program you want to load using the UP/DOWN cursor keys. It's as simple as that...

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

Renegade/Interactive Binary Illusions

It is with great honour that we present this superb (and, we might add, EXCLUSIVE) fully-playable demo of Renegade/Interactive Binary Illusion's excellent new graphic adventure.

If you read our preview way back in Issue 1, you'll already know that the game centres around the hilarious adventures of pilot-for-hire Joe King (geddit?). After accepting the job of flying film star Faye Russell into the heart of the Amazon for a photo shoot, hapless Joe gets embroiled in a crazy, 'B-Movie'-style plot starring zombies, pygmies, Amazon women and mad scientists! The game looks like it'll be a lot of fun — and you can get an idea of how much fun from this wonderful demo...

At the start of the demo, you find yourself locked in a hotel room by your arch rival Anderson. Now all you have to do is find your way out of the room and then escape from the hotel! If you want a little hint to get you going, then why not have a look at the blankets and sheets in the corner of the room — if used correctly they can get you out of (or should that be into?) a few holes...

This is a demo of the floppy version of the game, so there's music and sound effects only, but the CD-ROM version of the game will feature full speech!

Loading The Game...

This is as easy as pressing a few keys on your keyboard! Once you've installed the game onto your hard disk, log onto the **C:\PCG\QUEEN** directory and type **QUEEN**.

You will now be asked which soundcard you wish to hear music on. Enter the number of your preferred device, and then sit back and join in the fun.

Playing The Game

Flight Of The Amazon Queen is a graphic adventure along the lines of the LucasArts series of games and, like them, it's best played using a mouse.

To guide Joe around, point at a location and click with the left mouse button. If you move the pointer over an object, a possible action that you can perform on it will be suggested in the black bar between the main graphic window and the icon panel — click with the right mouse button to select it. You can also perform actions on objects by selecting icons from the menu panel — see the 'It's Amazon!' panel for more.

If you don't have a mouse (shame on you!), the game can be played using the keyboard — although it's slightly fiddlier. Move the pointer using the cursor keys, and press CTRL to make Joe walk or ALT to select the suggested action. To choose another action, press the key corresponding to the action's initial letter, i.e. 'U' for USE or 'T' for TALK TO, and then select it by pressing CTRL.

Finally, you can skip the animations by pressing ESCape, restart the demo by pressing F5, and quit to DOS by pressing F10. Oh, and have fun!

It's Amazon!

1 Open
Opens the currently highlighted object. Click on this and then on an object to open it.

2 Close
Just like Open, this one closes objects. Once again, just click on this and then the intended item.

3 Move
Allows you to push things around. Click on this and then on an object to move it.

4 Give
This is really obvious, isn't it? Click on this and then an item to give it to someone.

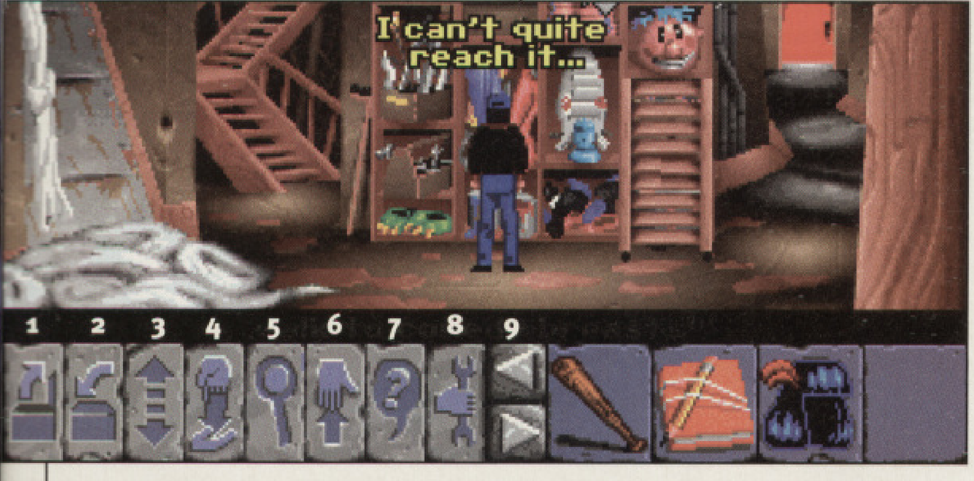
5 Look At
How simple do you want this? If you want to look at something, you use this.

6 Pick Up
Lets you put somethingthat you find in your pockets, without paying for it if absolutely necessary.

7 Talk To
A good conversation starter — select from the speech options by clicking on them.

8 Use
Combine two objects to make something new. Use the format USE (Object A) WITH (Object B).

9 Inventory
This strip of boxes shows what you are currently carrying. The two arrows on the left allow you to scroll through the entries.



All New World Of Lemmings

Psygnosis/DMA Design

Can there really be anyone who didn't get caught up in the Lemmings phenomenon? Well, yes actually. There were people who didn't find it colourful enough, or who didn't like the tiny character graphics. There were even people who weren't into the fact that you could only actually play Lemmings in blue dresses.

In an attempt to please those people, Psygnosis and DMA Design have crafted an all-new world of Lemmings, where the little guys dress up in costume and work their way through a plethora of exciting levels.

That's why, just for you, we bring you this fully-playable demo version of the upcoming release. The aim of the game is much the same as before — the Lemmings drop from a chute in one part of the level, and you have to guide them over walls, down cliffs, around traps and through solid rock if necessary to reach the exit in another part of the level. Can you save all the Lemmings?

There are six levels to enjoy, but sadly no music or sound effects — if you find this annoying, just stick a tape of 'How Much Is That Doggy In The Window?' as played by the London Kazoo Band on your stereo. You won't have to do this with the final game, of course...

Loading The Game...

Once you've installed the game onto your hard disk, all you need to do is go into the **C:\PCG\LEMMING** directory and type **L3** to load and run the game.

Game Controls

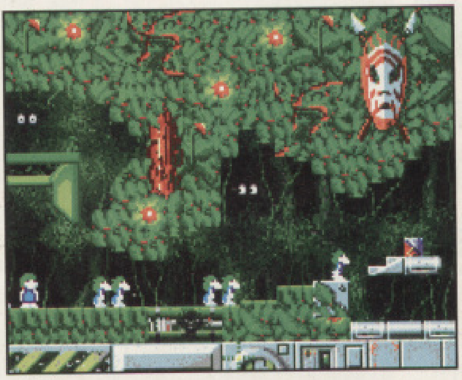
The game is controlled with the mouse, and is a doddle to play. On the main menu screen, click on any of the three Lemmings characters sitting around the ark to go straight into an 'easy' level. However, if you fancy a challenge, click on the door at the back of the ark to go to another menu screen — now click on any of the three islands to play a 'tough' level.

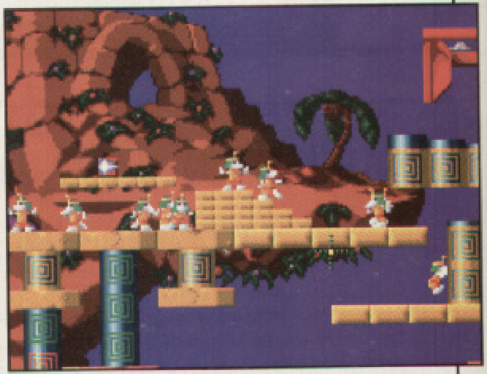
On the main game screen, you are faced with a row of icons along the bottom of the screen. Select the icon you wish to use, and then click on the Lemming you wish to apply it to. See the 'Lemming At 'Em!' panel to find out what all the icons do.

As you'll see, in All New World Of Lemmings you don't have 'skills' any more. Instead, there are little red crates lying about containing tools which the Lemmings can pick up and use. If you want to see what all the tools do, press 'D' while on the main menu screen to have a look at the demo level.

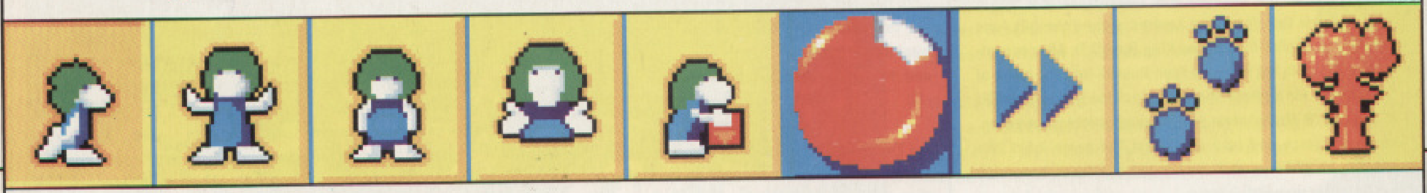
If you get a bit confused about which tools you've picked up and which Lemmings have got them, press the right mouse button. This will let you cycle through all the tools in your possession, and the Lemmings carrying them will be highlighted on-screen (their hair or backpacks will turn bright red!).

To restart a level press ESCape, and to quit back to DOS click on the trapdoor on the deck of the ark on the main menu screen.





Lemming At 'Em!



Walk
Makes the highlighted Lemming walk if they are currently doing something else, or changes their direction if they are already walking.

Block
The selected Lemming will stand still with both arms raised, stopping any other Lemmings from walking past.

Jump
Makes the selected Lemming jump — just right for getting past holes in the ground.

Use
After a Lemming has collected a tool, this icon will let them use it. The red bar below the icon indicates how many times you can use the tool.

Drop
If a Lemming is carrying a tool, this makes them to drop it. Remember that Lemmings can only carry one type of tool at a time!

Accelerate
If you are fed up waiting for your Lemmings to get from A to B, click on this icon to speed up time.

Timer
This dial shows you how much time you have left to complete the level.

Pause
'Paws'. Pauses the game. What else?

Nuke
That old favourite — this explodes all the Lemmings and returns you to the main menu screen.

Making A Boot Disk

If you're having problems running any of this month's floppy games try making a boot disk. Take a freshly formatted floppy disk, slap it into the disk drive (I'll assume it's drive A for the moment) and type: **SYS A:**. The system files will be transferred and within seconds you'll have a boot disk on your hands.

All you then need to do is leave the floppy in the disk drive, reset your machine and finally try loading the game again. Don't take the disk out of the machine as it boots up because you want the PC to read the information from the floppy rather than the hard disk.

ALERT! ALERT! My disk is faulty!

Due to the massive number of disks duplicated, the odd one might be a touch faulty. If you're unlucky enough to get one of these, don't despair because help is at hand. Whatever you do DON'T SEND THEM TO US! Simply send them off to the following address with an SAE for 28p:

PC GAMES Bodged Disks,
Diskxpress,
Unit 7, Willow Court,
Bourton Industrial Park,
Bourton-on-the-water,
Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

If you think you can solve your problems over the phone, try calling the disk helpline on **(0451) 810788**. The helpline is open between 3pm and 5pm on weekdays.

What the... HELP!

The Clue! and Fighting Tigers both require 4Mb of Expanded (EMS) memory to run and both of them require at least 580K of free base memory. If you have this, not Extended memory (XMS), they shouldn't cause you any problems whatsoever.

● These demos do not work under Windows and may not be compatible with Doublespace, QEMM 386 or Stacker disk compression software. Ignore at your peril!

The Fine Print Bit...

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AN EYE FOR AN EYE

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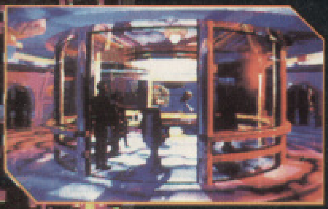

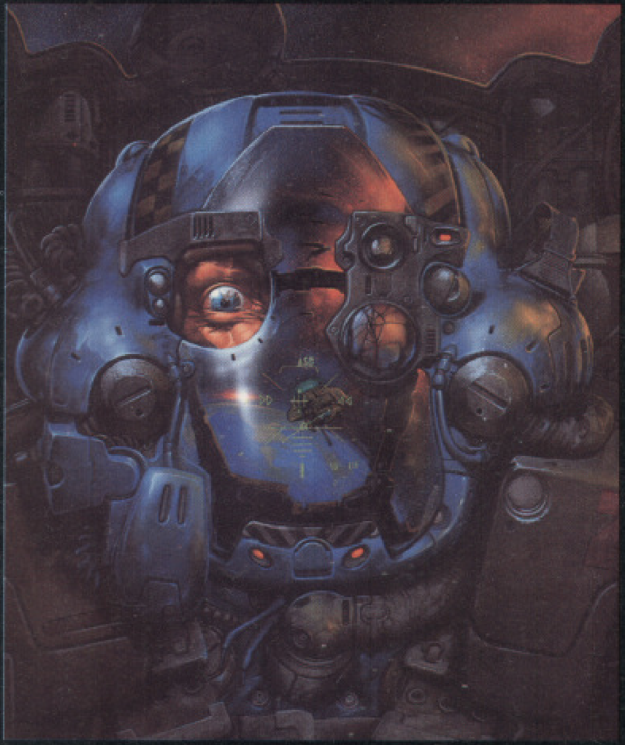

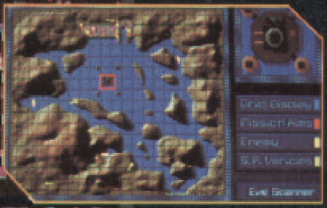

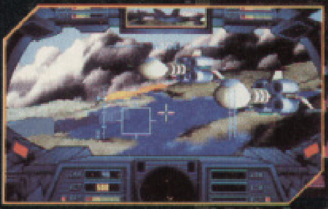

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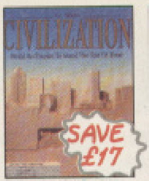

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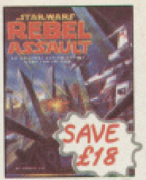

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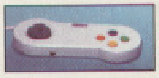

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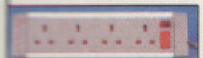

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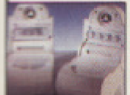

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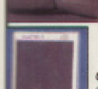

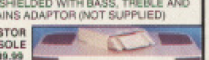

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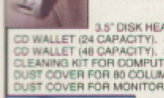

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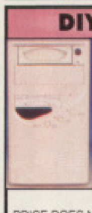

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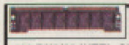

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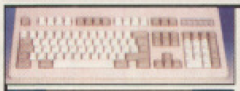

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Mindscape Goes Shopping

With its Blankety Blank chequebook and pen at the ready, Mindscape trawled the software world this month with a view to expanding its already impressive development resources. And it came back with two absolute bargains that would make housewives across the land proud.

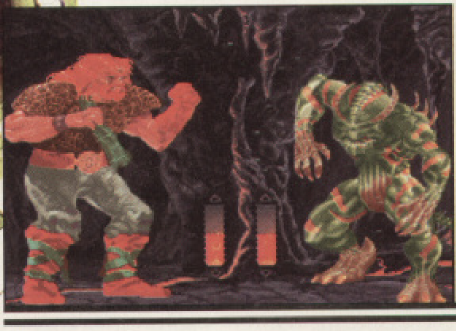
First out of the bargain bucket was the French development team Atreid, which is currently beavering away on Warriors, an innovative PC combat game (early screenshots of which are shown here) and F1 Racer, a Virtua Racing-style Formula 1 racing game. Atreid will become a part of Mindscape's international development organisation, currently headed up by the 'Scape's Executive Vice President, David Grenewetzki (bless you!).

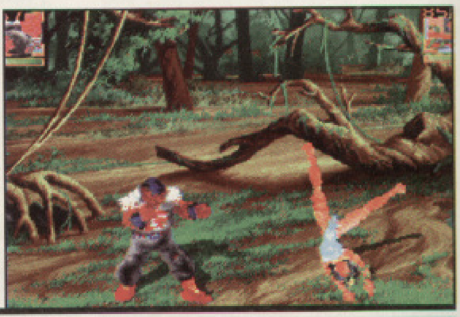
"Atreid is an important addition to our product development efforts," said Grenewetzki (shouldn't you see a doctor?). "Their proprietary development tools — the LibSys cross-platform development system and 3DBioMotion, an animation technology — strengthen our existing toolset."

And a mere two days later, it was cash ahoy for Strategic Simulations, Inc., the highly-acclaimed developer of computer wargames, sports simulations and fantasy role-playing games, many of which used to be published by US Gold.

"SSI is a cornerstone in our efforts to establish Mindscape as a major player in the field of entertainment software," said Bob Lloyd, Chairman and CEO of Mindscape, Inc. "This acquisition augments our already strong educational and informational development efforts with outstanding expertise."

So what does this mean to lovers of SSI's highly-successful role-playing games? Well, nothing the average PC gamer would notice. Mindscape now becomes publisher of SSI's future titles, leaving a gap in US Gold's publishing portfolio next the one where LucasArts used to be.





Domark's Getting Board!

No, that isn't a typographical error you can see above — it is in fact a well-crafted and particularly funny headline. You see, Domark, publishers of AV8B Harrier Assault and the forthcoming Lords of Midnight, is currently putting the finishing touches to its first ever boardgame — and it's a spin off from one of the company's earlier PC releases.

The Official Williams Renault Grand Prix Championship Boardgame (what a mouthful that is) is in the shops now priced at a mere £19.99. It's Domark's second partnership with the Didcot-based racing team, the first of which spawned a fast-moving, if unspectacular, PC racing game.

"This is our first endeavour into the market and it looks like being very successful," offered Brynn Gilmore, Business Development Manager at Domark. "We might well consider future releases in this area, it's been a lot of fun to do. But it's very much a sideline to our core business."

Domark is obviously expecting its inaugural foray into boardgame-land to be incredibly popular, and the 250,000 European print run should ensure that the shelves remain stocked throughout the Christmas period.

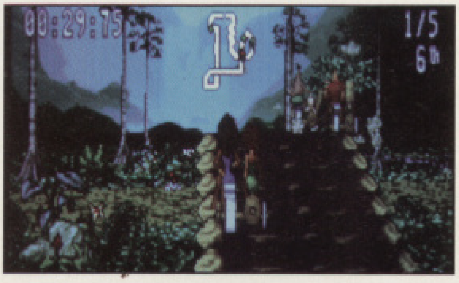
Core Strikes Gold!

CentreGold, the UK games distribution and publishing giant that owns US Gold, splashed out £5.43 million this month on Core Design. £2.94 million went directly to Core boss, the good-looking and remarkably funny Jeremy Smith. Our mate. Who we like very much. Especially now.

To celebrate this injection of cash, the Derby-based publisher announced the arrival of BC Racers — a PC driving game with a difference. Already dubbed the PC's answer to Super Mario Kart, BC Racers is a cartoon-style drive-'em-up across more than 30 tracks.

With three different track views to choose from, and over eight types of 3D terrain, the game promises to be the best-looking racer on the PC. Indeed, one foreign journalist was so impressed it uttered: "What can I say? I'm totally stoked." Whatever that means.

The very "stoking" BC Racers will be available from late December. Bet you can't wait, eh?



Sierra **Takes Another Cake!**

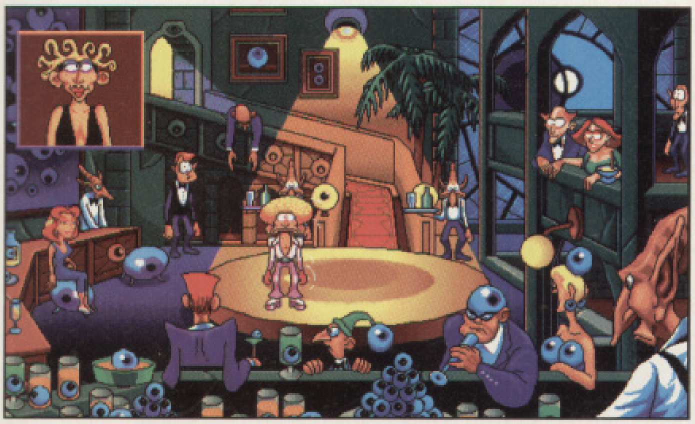
Remember the Gobliins trilogy? You know, the three quirky adventures with enough slap and stick to feed an army of comedians? Well, we do. And while their puzzles were obscure, the humour often forced, and the user-interface a pig to use, we sort of liked them in a French kind of way (which, for the uneducated, involves liking them to garlic, stripy shirts and berets. And hairy nostrils and fat women). Well, prepare yourself for more of the same when Sierra releases Coktel Vision's latest comical caper, the bizarrely titled, Woodruff And The Schnibble Of Azimuth.

You've got to hand it to Coktel Vision — they're not ones for using proper words. And they're not ones for sticking to sensible plots either; just listen to this: You must help the hero, Woodruff, avenge the killing of his teddy bear. Hmm... It's this wacky French sense of humour that made Fawlty Towers and The Young Ones so successful. They're so crazy. Or something.

Actually, Woodruff does sound like an interesting chap. Coktel reckons he's the most unpredictable hero in the history of computer gaming. Apparently, throughout the game he'll change into a baby, grow very old, fall in love and even turn into a woman. The lucky git.

Tex Avery-style animations are promised, accompanied by some 'unique multiscreen scrolling', whatever that may be. Over 20 characters appear in the adventure, and in the CD-ROM version these will be brought to life with proper digitised voices and everything.

It has to be said that each Gobliins game was better than the one before it, so with the experience Coktel has under its belt, Woodruff And The Schnibble Of Azimuth could out to be a bit of a winner. You'll be able to find out next month when we review the game in full.



TYPICAL

YOU WAIT

ALL YEAR

FOR A

QUALITY

COMPILATION

~

Hail, humans! It is I, Imp, the Devil's only officially-licensed advocate, here again to present you with yet another shocking statement, to wit:

"CD's are Utterly Pointless!"

Okay, so I've taken the plunge and upgraded to a 486. And although I did it begrudgingly, I have to admit it's improved my gaming pleasure no end. Doom is now much more playable (I think I'm beginning to like it, actually), and X-Wing no longer splutters along like some old banger running out of petrol.

However, looking at the release schedule for next year, it appears that I'm going to need an extra piece of hardware to play games on my PC — but this time I really can't see a need for it.

Although they're not that expensive (I am, after all, one of Hell's most respected employees), buying a CD-ROM just seems utterly pointless. And why's this? I'll tell you. In PC Review's latest issue, you'll find a list of the all-time top 100 PC games, compiled by the staff of that magazine, us here at PC GAMES and a few well-respected journos.

Now, if we take a look at that chart, we discover a few interesting facts: (1) The top five titles are all floppy games (Doom, SimCity 2000, Syndicate, TIE Fighter and Civilization); (2) Out of the Top 10, only one is CD-ROM only, namely Gabriel Knight; (3) Out of the Top 20, only two more, Battle Isle 2 and Rebel Assault, are truly CD-ROM only games — and that, fact fans, is only 15%.

Okay, so CD-ROM games are still very much in their infancy, and you could argue that the games in the Top 100 are getting on a bit. Surely today's sophisticated gamer requires much more than a few floppies can offer? Not so. The universally lauded Sim City 2000 came on a few floppies, and the brilliant Breakthru! on even less. These games prove that playability will win over anything else, no matter what fancy graphical trickery you try to gloss things over with.

Okay, so Magic Carpet and Ecstatica have shown what's possible with a CD. But are these games really *that* revolutionary? Or are are they simply Doom II (on a rug) and Alone In The Dark with graphical knobs on?

Come next Christmas, the amount of new games available on floppy will be negligible. EA has taken the bold step of announcing it won't be supporting disks of the 3.5" variety — and the other major players can't be that far behind.

If you ask me, the old argument that floppies can no longer cater for the power-hungry games of tomorrow just simply isn't true. I reckon it's just a case of the software industry trying to get us to part with more of our cash, when everybody knows that CDs cost a lot less to produce than floppy disks. Come on, you PC softies, what do *you* say?

● What do you think of Imp's ravings? Write in and tell us at: PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. By the way, Imp's opinions are all his own, and in no way reflect those of PC GAMES or its publishers.

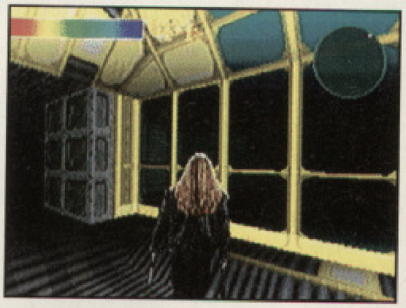
Virtually **Fact-Free**

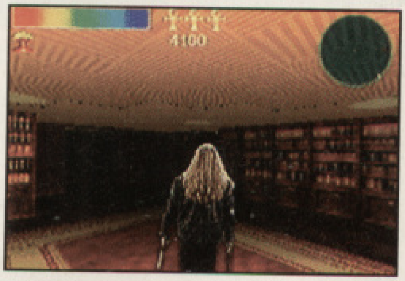
This month's award for the most amount of b&ll&#cks contained within one press release goes to Elite, with this superb effort: "Elite Systems presents Virtuoso — a 'virtual adventure' which, for the first time, presents the player with the opportunity to experience quasi-Virtual Reality, with a realism never before evidenced on a computer games system." Hmm... we can only hope that English isn't the mother tongue of whoever wrote this PR nonsense.

You can rely on PC GAMES to brush aside the crap and give you the facts straight, so here's the above in something we can all understand. Virtuoso is set in the 21st Century, a time when music and Virtual Reality are the only means of escape from the escalating crime rate. Using what Elite is describing as a "unique" third-person perspective viewpoint, Virtuoso takes you through three virtual worlds, each with eight or more separate missions to tackle.

This fully-interactive arcade adventure, due out before the end of the year, is already turning heads within the software industry. According to an Elite spokesperson, the reason for this is simple: "The video game and music industries are on rapidly converging paths and Virtuoso incorporates the best of both worlds. It is a true multimedia product."

It has to be said that Elite hasn't exactly had an A-Grade PC game in a long while (if at all). Whether or not Virtuoso will elevate the publisher to major status within the PC games' world remains to be seen, so watch out for a full review just as soon as we can get our hands on a copy.





Virgin Shocks The Music Industry

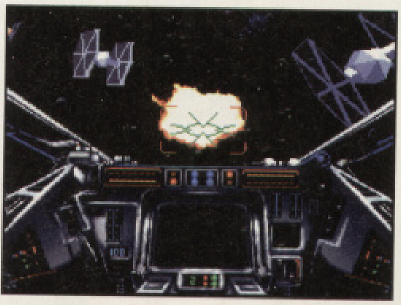
It had to happen. With the record industry continually losing ground to computer games, the merging of both markets was always the only way kids would continue to take a passing interest in what's 'happening' in the music scene — witness the Mario, Tetris and Lemmings singles. Well, things have taken slightly unusual step further in that direction, and it's all thanks to a PC game.

Sea Of Tranquillity is a joint project between Virgin Interactive and a record label called Echo. It's an album on CD-only, which is 90 percent music and 10 percent binary. You see, Track One of the disc isn't a potentially chart-topping ditty at all — it's a fully-playable demo of Argonaut's Creature Shock (on this month's PC GAMES CD and reviewed this issue — see page 60).

It's a strange idea to say the least, and PC GAMES can't figure out who benefits the most, Virgin or Echo. At the time of going to press, there were no firm plans to repeat the exercise, presumably so that the success of this CD can be accurately measured. What's going to happen next — will PC GAMES start covermounting East 17 albums? Let's hope not, eh?

Instant Relief For Star Wars Junkies

Can't wait for the arrival of LucasArts' Dark Forces? Watched the digitally remastered and re-packaged videos at least a hundred times? Still need more Star Wars action? Well,



don't worry — there are others just as sad as you (both our Daves, if truth be known). Take some solace in the fact that LucasArts has just revamped its popular X-Wing collection and stuck it CD-ROM.

The X-Wing Collectors CD features the brilliant X-Wing plus its mission disks, Imperial Pursuit and B-Wing. On top of this, six new historical missions have been added, bringing the total number of missions to a staggering 122. Graphical enhancements are also promised, along with a new musical score and over a thousand lines of digitised speech.

Distributed by Virgin, the X-Wing Collectors CD will be released in early December, price yet to be confirmed.

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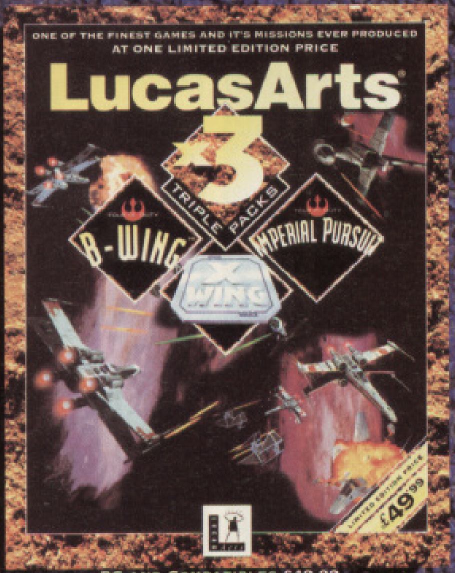
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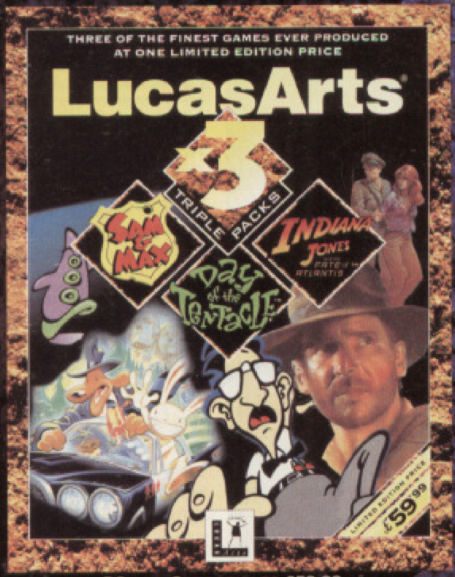
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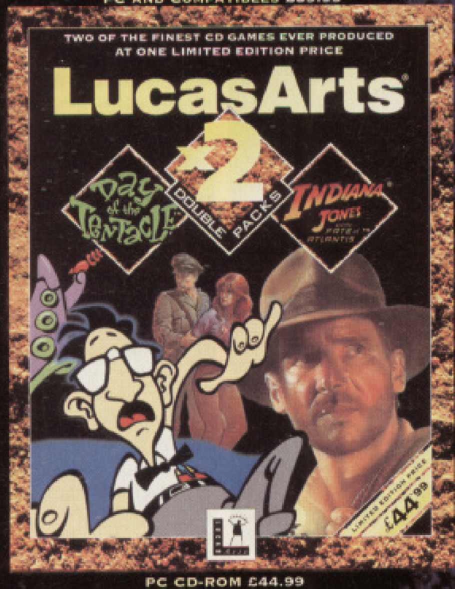
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CHARTS

Top 10 PC Games

1. **Colonization**
MicroProse

2. **Doom 2**
VIE

3. **System Shock**
Origin

4. **Doom**
Id Software

5. **Transport Tycoon**
MicroProse

6. **Sim City 2000**
Maxis

7. **FIFA Soccer**
Electronic Arts

8. **TIE Fighter**
VIE

9. **TFX**
Ocean

10. **Theme Park**
Electronic Arts

Top 5 CD-ROM Games

1. **Inferno**
Ocean

2. **Magic Carpet**
Electronic Arts

3. **Ecstatica**
Psygnosis

4. **Under a Killing Moon**
US Gold

5. **Doom 2**
VIE

Top 5 PC Budget Games

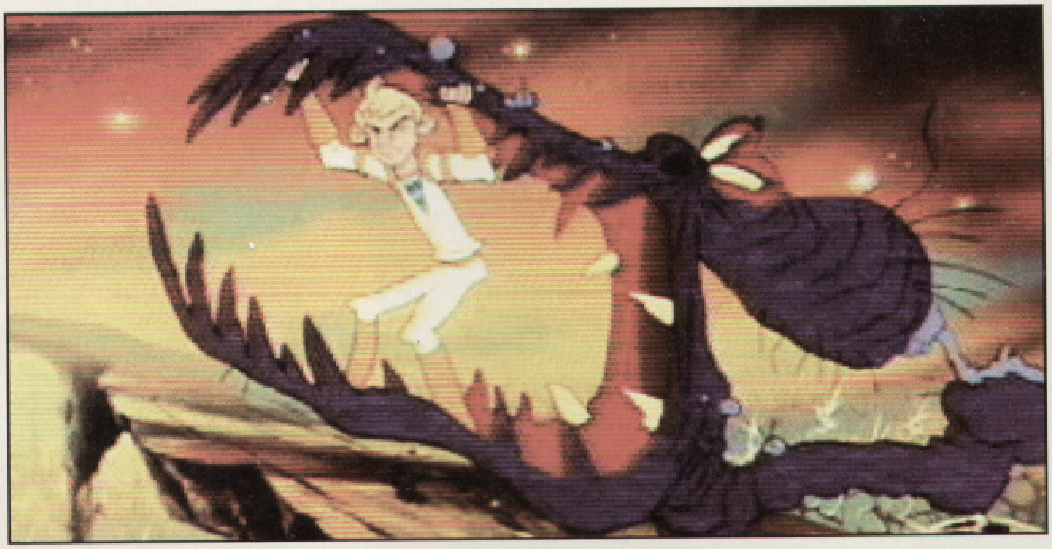
1. **F1 Grand Prix**
PowerPlus

2. **Monkey Island 2**
Kixx XL

3. **Gunship 2000**
Powerplus

4. **Tornado & Falcon 3**
Digital Int./MicroProse

5. **Great Naval Battles**
Kixx XL



Watch **This Space**

Space Ace was the second laserdisc arcade machine to come trundling out of Readysoft's game factory. Like its predecessor, Dragon's Lair, the game looked beautiful (possibly even better than the medieval visuals of Dirk's adventure) but suffered a similar problem in the gameplay department, i.e there wasn't any. And in this strange, topsy-turvy world of PC games, Space Ace, like Dragon's Lair before it, is to be given a PC CD-ROM release.

Substitute Princess Daphne for a woman called Kimberly, and the dragon for a blue alien called Borf, and the two games suddenly become identical. It's the classic story: boy meets girl, girl gets nicked, boy saves girl. But the intergalactic setting paves the way for some imaginative set pieces as Borf tries to zap our hero with his Infanto Ray, a bolt that turns Ace from muscle-bound hero into blubbing eighteen-month old baby.

What made the original arcade machine so special was its revolutionary use of cartoon graphics — unheard of in those days — to portray the action. But these breathtaking visuals had a price — the gameplay had to be compromised with the player only taking part in the on-screen action at specific points in the adventure. Of course, in those days, people knew no better, so the machine quickly established itself as a firm favourite.

Priced at £39.99 and released sometime in the next month, with its full-screen, cartoon graphics, Space Ace CD promises to be the most faithful conversion of the old coin-op yet. But whether or not this is a good thing will be revealed in the next fun-packed issue.

Nothing To Do With The ***TV Show***

Once again, another company has managed to create an interactive movie. This time, it's Sierra's turn to tread where everybody else has already failed — but hopefully the previous examples will have educated the game's designers.

The Last Dynasty, a double-CD "fast-paced action movie", is the culmination of years of hard work by its designers. But these aren't the usual spotty-faced programmers we've come to know and love (come to think of it, can anybody name a spotty-face programmer? God, there used to be loads. Now they're all living the life of a pop star and looking dead fashionable. Bring back the old days, that's what I say — there were loads of ugly coders, which made people like us look sexy.). Nope, the team behind this release comprises cinematographers, animators and script writers. And programmers, of course.

The game tells the story of an ordinary man who is suddenly pulled into a cosmic battle to save something called the Ultimate Knowledge from the Evil Masters. Very intriguing.

In a step away from the more traditional graphic adventures it's used to producing, Sierra has gone all-out to be as innovative as possible. The Last Dynasty is a sophisticated combat simulation in the Wing Commander mould — and by golly, it boasts some impressive features.

Real-time mixing of music, images, sound effects and programming will make for a fast-paced game, while the blending of graphical styles — 3D rendered graphics, fractal landscapes and video-captured actors — should ensure things never become too 'samey'.

The Last Dynasty will be blasting on to CD-ROM drives across the galaxy early in the New Year.

CD Sales Break Records

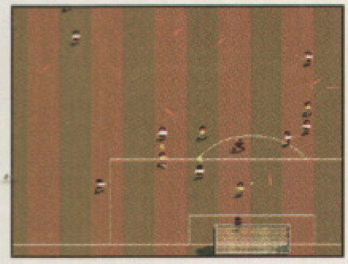
Two long-awaited CD titles were released this month — with two software companies claiming to have set the record for best first day ship-out.

Under A Killing Moon was the first to hit shelves, achieving a first day ship-out of 50,000 units — US Gold's highest yet.

"Over the past year, we've gained a unique insight into the way that the CD-ROM market is evolving," says US Gold Marketing Manager, Tamara Grimwood. "The success of Rebel Assault, which was released 12 months ago, gave us a solid base from which to build an unbeatable CD catalogue."

However, it was Inferno that really set the shop floors alight. Ocean claimed a world-wide first day hit of 92,000 — only eight thousand off Virgin's initial Doom 2 ship-out, and that was on floppy and CD!

These figures are further proof that the PC games industry is heading towards a CD-only market. Indeed, the floppy-based games that have been announced for '95 can be counted on the fingers of one hand, while those appearing on a shiny Compact Disc require additional digits and the use of a calculator in order to be accurately totalled.



Doing It The **Sensible Way?**

With Sensible World Of Soccer still a good few months away (Easter 1995 at the earliest, by all accounts), PC owners will have to look to Black Legend for a bit of footy relief. But that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Football Glory, Black Legend's first arcade football simulation, hopes to tempt Sensi lovers to its door by taking the best bits from Sensible Soccer and adding a whole host of new ones. And while the more cynical among you will think that Football Glory's visual style can be found in the dictionary listed under 'plagiarism', it seems that Black Legend's tactics have worked; our sister mag CU Amiga awarded the Amiga version a whopping 95%, and declared it to be the "best football simulation... ever!"

Football Glory plays slightly differently to Sensible Soccer because Black Legend has added a host of new moves such as dummies and bicycle kicks, which can be accessed with simple joystick manoeuvres.

But it's the additional animations that really set Football Glory apart from the rest. We're promised all kinds of wacky sequences which depict, in detail, events such as carrying injured players off the pitch and arguing with the ref. Strangely, if you feel the referee has made a bad decision, you can get one of your players to punch him in the face. And this is supposed to be The Beautiful Game? (Hey, I wonder if you can bribe the opposing goalkeepers to fix matches? Hmmm...)

On paper, Football Glory has a lot going for it. For a start, you'll be able to snap it up next month, when there doesn't appear to be a great deal of competition, what with the World Cup cash-ins now distant memories. And if there's one thing the PC is lacking, it's a truly decent arcade football game that attains the same high level of playability as the Amiga version of Sensible Soccer. Well, we're keeping our fingers tightly crossed...

Goodbye Alex... **Hello Alex!**

Gather round, girls, for there's some sad news to tell. Games guru Alex Fraser has left PC GAMES. No longer will his flowing blond locks grace our pages, and no longer will we have to put jokes into his rather bland copy.

But fear not, females. For sometimes-bespectacled Alex Simmons takes his place — and he's infinitely more funny, if only in the looks department!

No, seriously, PC GAMES would like to welcome its newest team member. Alex has previously worked on ST Action, Amiga Action and most recently PC Player. However, when he heard there was a vacancy on the world's most popular PC leisure magazine, he jumped at the chance. Unfortunately, he didn't get the job, so he had to make do with PC GAMES.

Rolling Around The **'Net**

Although Imp wouldn't agree, the Internet is the place to be right now. Most youth magazines are regularly running features on how best to surf in Cyberspace, with even 'cool' magazines such as Select, Loaded and even Empire, devoting columns and features to it.

Perhaps the most interesting recent development is the news that the next Rolling Stones concert is to be broadcast live down the 'Net. BBS users will simply be able to log-on, configure their sound cardsand sit back and enjoy the dulcet tones of Mick, Keith, and, er... all the rest of them.

Look out for more hard facts just as soon as we can get them. And if this story proves not to be true then blame The Big Breakfast. We copied it off them, you see.

Team **Talk**

Who are the geezas who write PC GAMES? And just what or who has taken their fancy this month? All is revealed below...

David Upchurch

Editor

"I went away on holiday this month, leaving my colleagues to complete the mag without me. In fact, I wasn't even going to come back at all. Oh, how I miss the beach. I miss the sand too and I miss swimming in the clear waters of the Med. Would I have come back for Under a Killing Moon? Er, no. Not really."

Dean Evans

Assistant Editor

"Apart from finishing Little Big Adventure, I've been toying with the idea of bumping off Dave and taking control of the magazine myself. All I need to do is lay a trail of cakes towards Beachy Head and then one good push and..."

Alex Fraser

Staff Writer

"Well, apart from clearing out my desk and remembering all those great times we all had... staying until 12 o'clock every night, giving up our weekends, having no friends or a social life... I played Novastorm. I just love playing all the average games that score below 75%. Thanks for giving them to me Dave. "

David Kelsall

Art Editor

"While Alex has been clearing out his junk, I've managed to sneak onto his PC to play Ecstatica. I just love the atmosphere, the flatulent bear, the werewolf, the statue doing a wee-wee and the... oh hang on a minute, I've got to go and have another ... quack. Ooh, sorry about that. Excuse me. Clear the way please. I think I'm going to –"

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Why six portable stereos had us dancing in the streets, page 39

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the Real THING?

The new 3DO 'Super Console' offers flashy graphics, classy sounds and ace gameplay. But don't sell your 486 just yet, because Creative Labs have come up with a way for PC owners to enjoy the gaming pleasures of both worlds. PC GAMES investigates...

Panasonic
R·E·A·L

Those PCs never used to be up to much. Compared to their console counterparts, they were just way too slow for serious games playing. The Sega and Nintendo machines could shift their sprites and backgrounds around so quickly, which made for bright, colourful, frantic gaming. As for the PCs, they came off best in games where the machine was required to 'think': strategy games, RPGs, flight sims and the like.

Things got better for PC gamers when processors got faster. Everything else got faster too — graphics cards, hard disks, the works — until now you can get awesome power from a Pentium chip, the 24-valve, turbo-charged version of a PC.

It's not all just about speed though. Because of the quality of the hardware, we can get so much more from our machines now. Think about how good the music and effects from soundcards are now compared to the internal speaker, that horrible bleepy thing that, well, bleeps when you switch on the computer. Yes, games used to run off that. Sod nostalgia — it's enough to make you shudder.

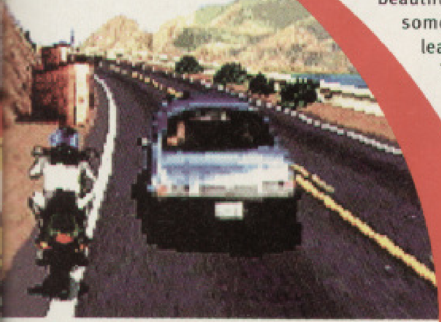
You'd have thought, then, that by now the PC would have got the games scene sown up, right? But the console makers haven't been standing around twiddling their electronic thumbs, you know. No way, Jose. You need only look at the 'next generation' consoles to see that they've been keeping pace, machines like the Atari Jaguar, the Sega Saturn... And the 3DO.

The 3DO?

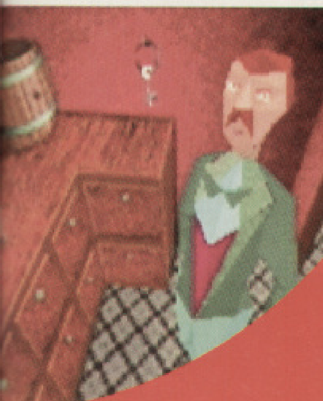
Yes, the 3DO. It's new and exciting, and there are some storming games on it. Sure, it's only another console, with many of the inherent limitations of 'old' consoles (i.e. no keyboard, limited 'save game' potential, largely 'action-orientated' gameplay), but the quality they seem to be achieving on some of their titles is pretty damn hot. You get CD music and beautiful video graphics wrapped around some seriously good gameplay — at least, you do on some of the games. True, the 3DO has its fair share of duff titles too, but it's more about potential at this stage — and the 3DO has lots.

So, should we PC players be quaking in our boots that everybody's going to give up designing games for our machines, and bow down with the others in front of a 3DO console chanting "We're not worthy"? Not a chance. Instead, we can carry on, safe in the knowledge that the widespread use and sheer flexibility of the PC will ensure the companies will continue to write great games for it, and we can play any 3DO titles that take our fancy without buying a console.

Hurrah for that! But how? By buying the 3DO card for your PC, that's how.



(Above) White-knuckle biking in Road Rash. Brmmm.
(Below) Alone In The Dark gets the 3DO treatment.

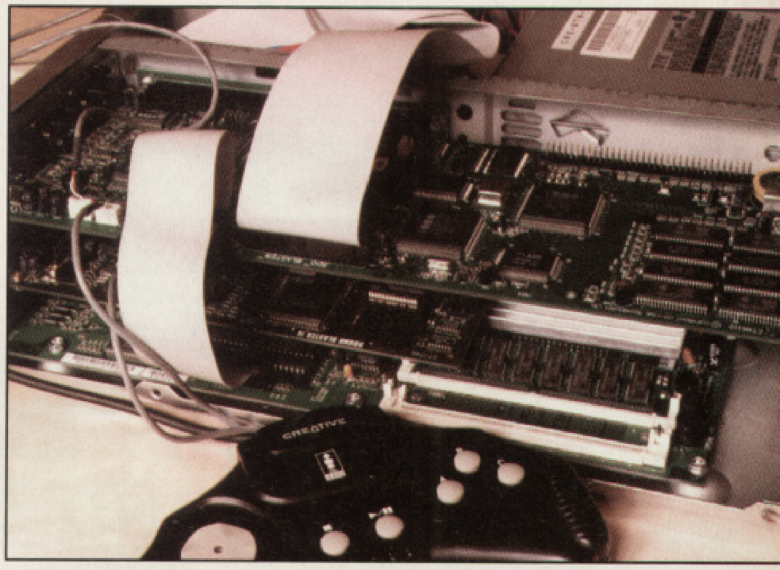


The 3DO Card?

Yes, the 3DO card. It's like having a 3DO machine inside your PC, and it has been created by the technical development chaps at Creative Labs (no doubt in the lulls between developing new Sound Blaster cards).

How does it work? Well, you simply plug it into your computer, like you would a soundcard, and hook up the cables. Then you install the software. After all that hoo-hah (it's not too bad, actually, and if you get stuck the manual has some pretty nifty explanations of what to do) you stick a 3DO game disc into your CD-ROM drive and click on the 3DO icon in Windows. It then does all the rest. Guaranteed.

There's one small insect in the ointment, though. The current version of the 3DO card only works with Creative's own soundcards and CD-ROM drive. If you've got anything else, then you'll have to wait till March, when we're promised a version that runs on any system. If you don't have a CD-ROM or soundcard, then you can buy a multimedia upgrade kit when you get the 3DO card, of course — Creative Labs will gladly take your money.



My word, what a big one. Measuring up at a whopping 13 inches, the 3DO Blaster will only just fit inside most PC casings, so slide it in gently for hours of fun and games.

There are a couple of things that make this little invention worth a second look. First, at under ú300 it's ú150 cheaper than the 3DO console itself, and runs neatly as part of your PC. Second, it runs all the games without straining the system at all. That means that even if you have an old 386 and can't afford to just walk into Dixons, slap a wad of twenties on the counter, and say "Give me a Pentium", then you can still play games that are bang up to date, play fast, and look and sound great. And believe me, in certain ways there's not much on the PC to compete with certain 3DO games.

➡

The 3DO Games?

All right, so I've said that the 3DO games are a bit of a mixed bag at the moment. Some high-profile titles like Gridders didn't stir me at all — it's nothing more than a glorified puzzle game, and a bit snore-worthy at that. Others are conversions of PC games that haven't come off the better for it. Take Super Wing Commander, for instance — Wing III will just blow it away. And that's not the only one of its kind.

On the other hand, all you need to do is see a crowd of gawping PC players gather round a 3DO machine when Road Rash kicks in, and you'll see what the fuss is about. It's by far the superior of other Road Rash console versions, with presentation and speed that'll leave you totally gob-smacked. Or try John Madden's Football on for size — it's an updated 1995 lease of life for an old PC game, which is totally addictive compared with other American Football games.

One big advantage of 3DO games is the very fact that they're designed for a console and a joypad. That makes them all very easy to learn and control in comparison with their PC counterparts. With Road Rash, for instance, you'll be up and running over pedestrians and beating up traffic cops in a matter of moments. And all it takes is one trip up the Pacific Highway to get you hooked into the 'oh, I'll just have one more race' syndrome. Always a good sign.

Wrap It Up, I'll Take It...

So there it is, a £300 add-on for your PC that allows you to enjoy 'next generation' games without shelling out a fortune on a new Pentium PC...

...Well, maybe. For a start you have to have the right CD-ROM drive and soundcard. And, of course, it's only really worth your while getting a 3DO card if all the new games are more akin to Road Rash rather than Gridders.

And then, of course, you'll be missing out on all those great Pentium games that are beginning to hit the shelves, which potentially will make the 3DO stuff look very shoddy. And as Pentium prices start to drop (and more games appear that make full use of it) in the next year or so, it'll make more sense to get one.

And then there's always the Jaguar to consider. That's due to get a PC card in the spring, and it's pretty much in the same place as the 3DO right now, with a small bag of mixed-quality software and only a whole heap of gaming potential to keep us interested. Of course, you can be sure that we'll run you the details when they crawl out into the light of day.

What a load of options. So what can you do? Enter our big Christmas compo on page 28, that's what, and win one of two 3DO cards, all courtesy of PC GAMES. Now aren't we nice to you?

THE GOOD...

There are several excellent reasons for drooling over the Creative Labs 3DO card, and these excellent reasons are...

Road Rash

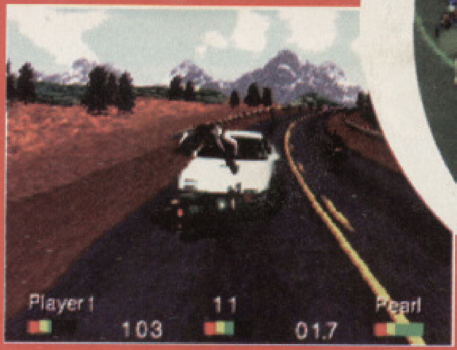
Race around on a high-speed motorbike, bashing your street-smart opponents and dashing against the clock. Brilliant texture-mapped 3D graphics and violently-addictive gameplay.

FIFA Soccer

Has the same excellent (if tricky to get the hang of) gameplay as its PC counterpart, but the TV-style presentation and the high-resolution, multi-view 3D graphics put it streets ahead of the competition.

Twisted

A weird fantasy TV gameshow in which you're the star! Although essentially little more than a load of bizarre puzzles strung together, it's great fun.



...AND THE BAD!

There are also several excellent reasons for not being interested in the Creative Labs 3DO card, and these excellent reasons are...

Sewer Shark

Originally produced for the Mega CD console, Sewer Shark is one of those basic FMV shoot-'em-ups, where the graphics dominate and the gameplay seems to have been slapped in as an afterthought. Er, apparently you thunder along various sewers, shooting rats and other unsanitary imaginings. Microcosm down the drains, anyone?

Alone In The Dark

3DO Alone In The Dark is basically a tarted-up version of the old PC classic, which would be quite good were it not for the fact that (a) controlling Carnby using the controls on the 3DO's joypad is a nightmare; (b) despite the 3DO's custom graphics chip it looks worse than the PC version and, finally, (c) you can already get it on the PC.

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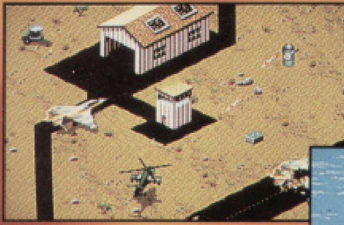

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- 30 different combat missions.

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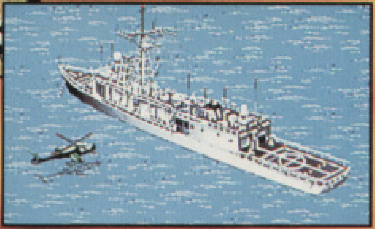
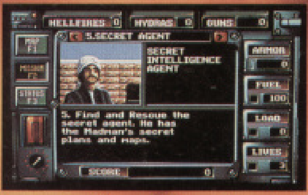


- Rescue downed comrades.
- Use satellite intelligence to plan missions and map progress.



HELLFIRES 0 HYDRAS 0 GUNS 0

5.SECRET AGENT

SECRET INTELLIGENCE AGENT

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Screenshots from PC formats.

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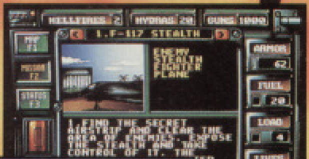
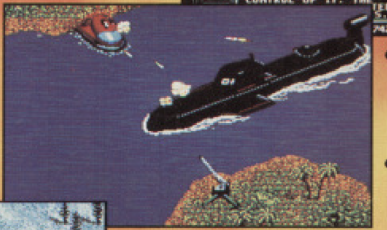


HELLFIRES 2 HYDRAS 20 GUNS 1000

1.F-117 STEALTH

ENEMY STEALTH FIGHTER PLANE

1.FIND THE SECRET AIRSTRIP AND CLEAR THE AREA OF ENEMIES. EXPOSE THE STEALTH AND TAKE CONTROL OF IT. THE



- Pilot a Commanche helicopter, an F117A Stealth Fighter, an MX-9 Attack Hovercraft and an Assault Motorcycle.
- 8 varied campaigns with over 30 different missions.

JUNGLE
STRIKE
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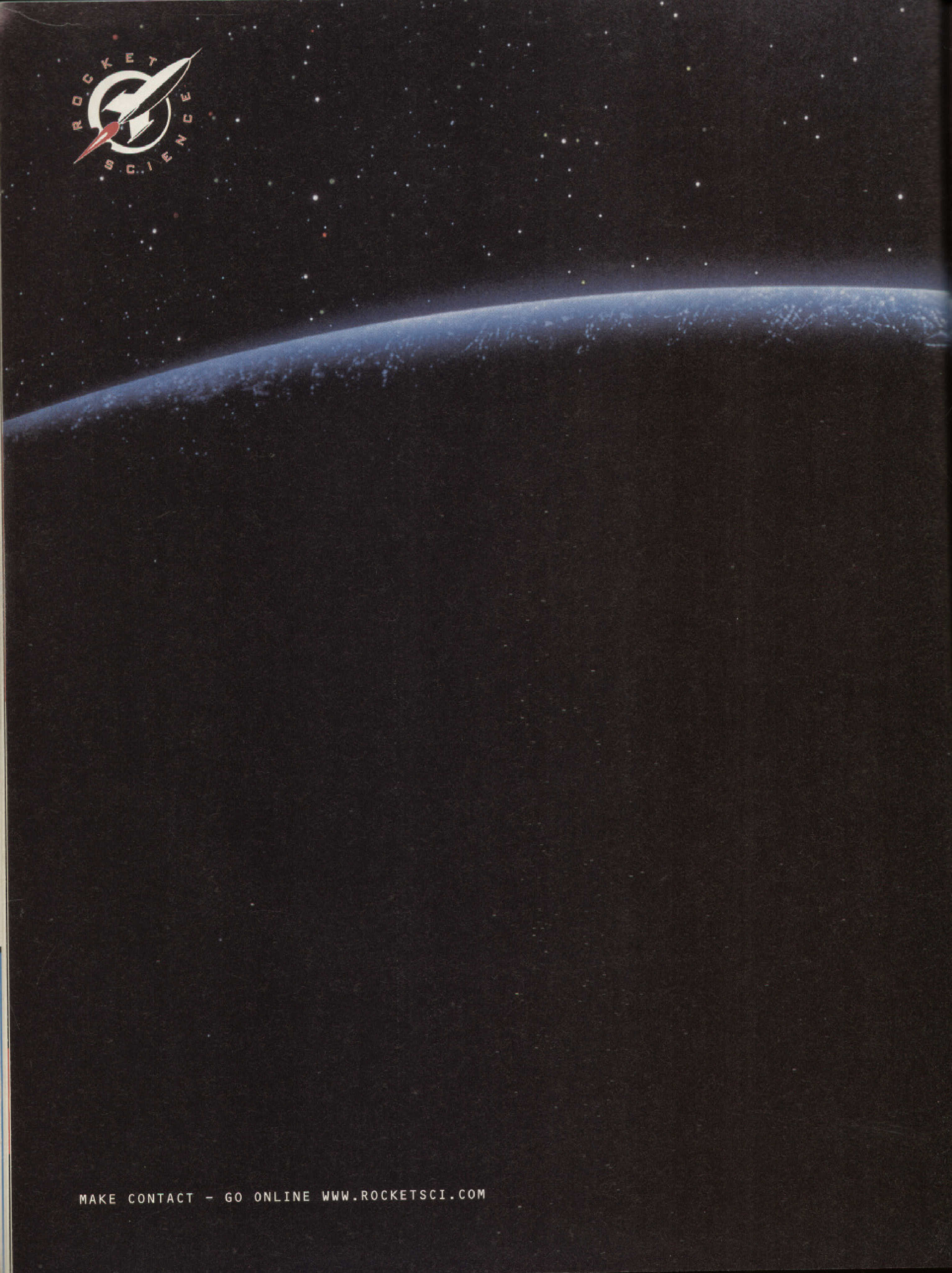

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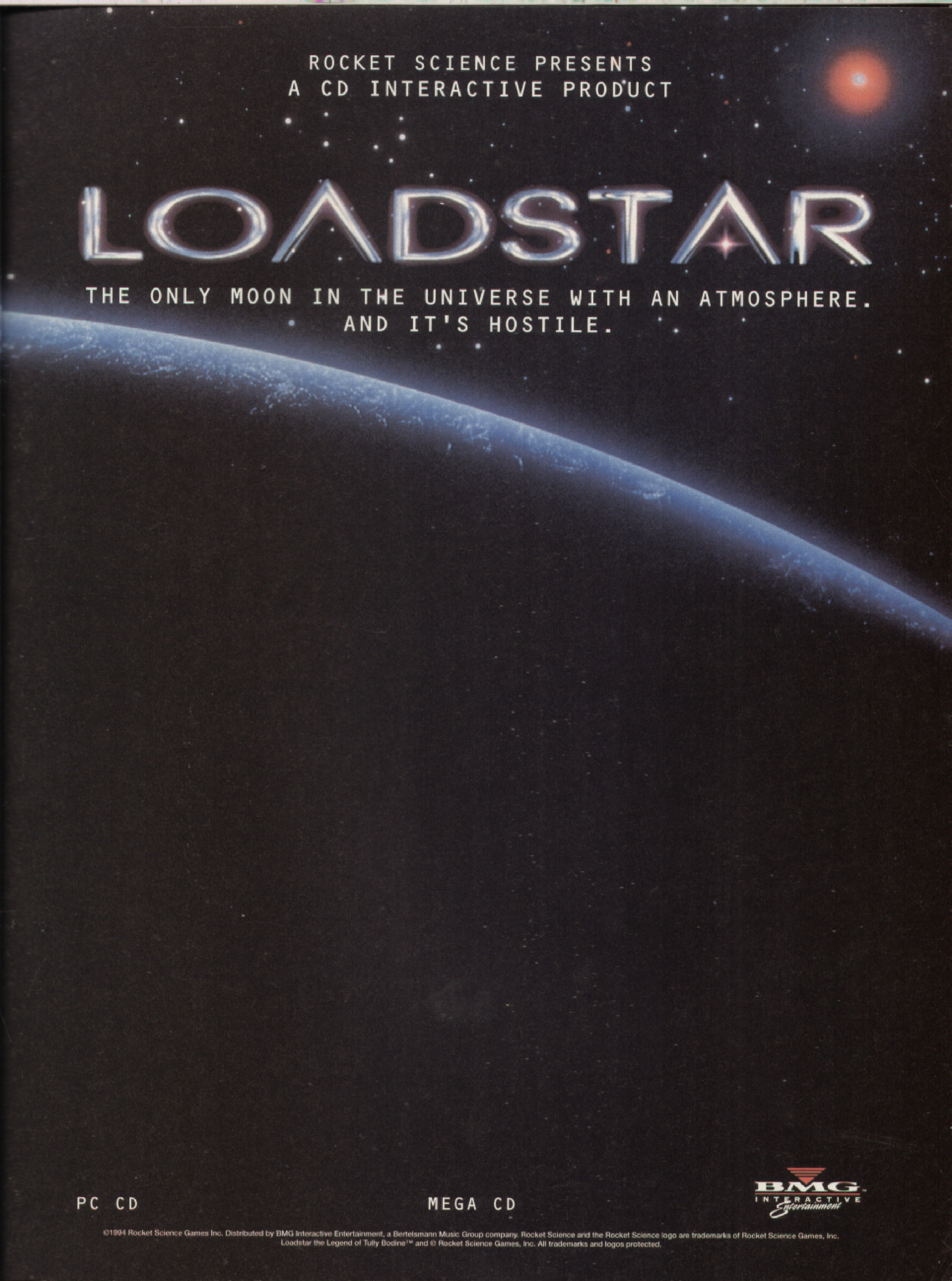
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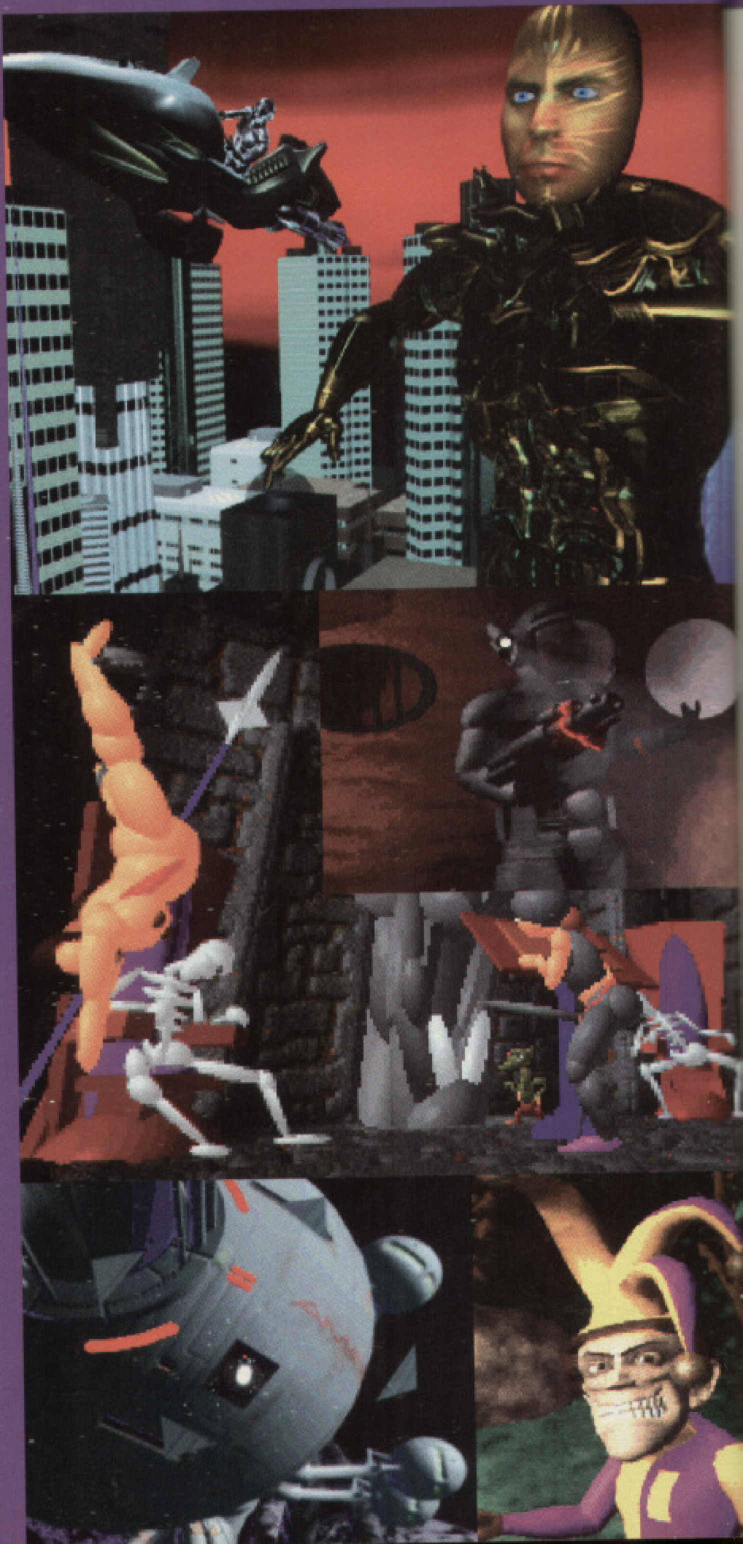
WIN! A 3DO F

You've read about the 3DO Blaster on page 23, now win it in this amazing compo, all thanks to Creative Labs (bless 'em). We have two to give away. PLUS bumper Xmas hampers containing EVERY game reviewed this issue!



PC games are great, aren't they? **We've got Magic Carpet, Inferno, Little Big Adventure, US Navy Fighters... in fact, a whole suitcase of games that simply wipe the floor with the consoles. Yes, you can keep your Donkey Kong Country and your Super Mario Land games, because the humble PC is destined to become the future of interactive entertainment.**

In fact, the PC is so versatile these days that, with the addition of a simple add-on card, it can display Full-Motion Video. In fact, it can even run games designed for other computers. With software emulators, for example, it can already run classic ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64 games. And in the coming year, the PC will also be blessed with hardware that will allow it to run CD-i, Atari Jaguar and even 3DO titles.

The 3DO Blaster from Creative Labs is one such add-on card. It fits snugly inside your PC just like a sound card, and after installing the emulation software, booting up Windows and clicking on the 3DO icon, your PC instantly becomes a rooting-tooting, games-blasting 3DO.

Yes, with the 3DO Blaster card you can play Road Rash, FIFA Soccer and John Madden's Football without cramming another box onto your desk. You can play them in a little window, or full-screen, and it's just like playing on a real 3DO — there's no difference in speed and no difference in performance.

But best of all, the 3DO Blaster runs 3DO games no matter how fast your PC is. Even if you have a clunky old 386, for example, with the 3DO card nestling inside your PC, you can still play a 3DO game at the same speed as a 486 or a Pentium owner.

The REAL Thing

And you can win one. Yes, you. You see, Creative Labs is so pleased with its technological marvel, that it has decided to give two 3DO Blaster cards away to our readers, plus a selection of the best games that the 3DO has to offer.

The first prize is a complete 3DO Blaster multimedia kit, which contains the 3DO Blaster card, a double-speed CD-ROM drive and a brand-spanking new Sound Blaster 16 soundcard. In addition, the lucky winner will also receive a variety bag of 3DO games, including Road Rash, FIFA Soccer and, er, Gridders, probably. And, if this wasn't enough, the winner also gets to take home every single game reviewed in this issue of PC GAMES — full price, budget, CD Updates, everything.

As for the second prize, we have a second 3DO Blaster card to give away, plus a value-pack of 3DO games, plus every single PC game that's been reviewed by Dave, Dean and Alex in this issue. How about that for a Christmas present?

OR YOUR PC!

3DO
BLASTER
3DO
BLASTER
THE 3DO COMPANY CD
3DO

How To Enter

As Christmas is almost upon us, there'll be no clever word-play, no tricky puzzles or boring old "I'd like to win the 3DO card because..." questions. No, this time we're going to keep it all nice and simple.

All you have to do is is read the three questions below. You then choose the correct answer from the three choices available, and write them down on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope. For example, if you think that the answer to Question 1 is 'Ad Lib', then write 1 (a) on your entry.

When you've answered all the questions to the best of your abilities, add your name and addres to your entry and send it to us at: Oh-Oh-3DO Compo, PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

All entries must reach us by the 2nd of January 1995 (Happy New Year, by the way), when the winner will be drawn from Dave Kelsall's novelty Chewbacca mask with all the pomp and silliness of Noel Edmonds doing the National Lottery.

Those Questions Are...

1. **Creative Labs make which family of soundcards?**
- **(a) Ad Lib**
- **(b) Sound Blaster**
- **(c) Roland**

2. **'3DO' stands for...**
- **(a) 3 Dead Orang-utans**
- **(b) 3 Dimpled Oranges**
- **(c) Absolutely nothing at all.**

3. **The 3DO card runs under...**
- **(a) Microsoft Windows**
- **(b) One minute and twenty-four seconds**
- **(c) DOS 6.2**

3DO
BLASTER
TECHNICAL ASSISTANT
Santa's Sack
Fairy Princess

The Small Print

Only one entry per household. This competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images, their relatives or their friends (if they have any). The competition closes on the 2nd of January 1995, and the winners will be notified shortly afterwards. No alternative prizes will be offered. The Editor's decision is final (he's a hard man, you know) and no correspondence will be entered into. While every care is taken, we cannot accept any responsibility for entries lost or damaged in the post.

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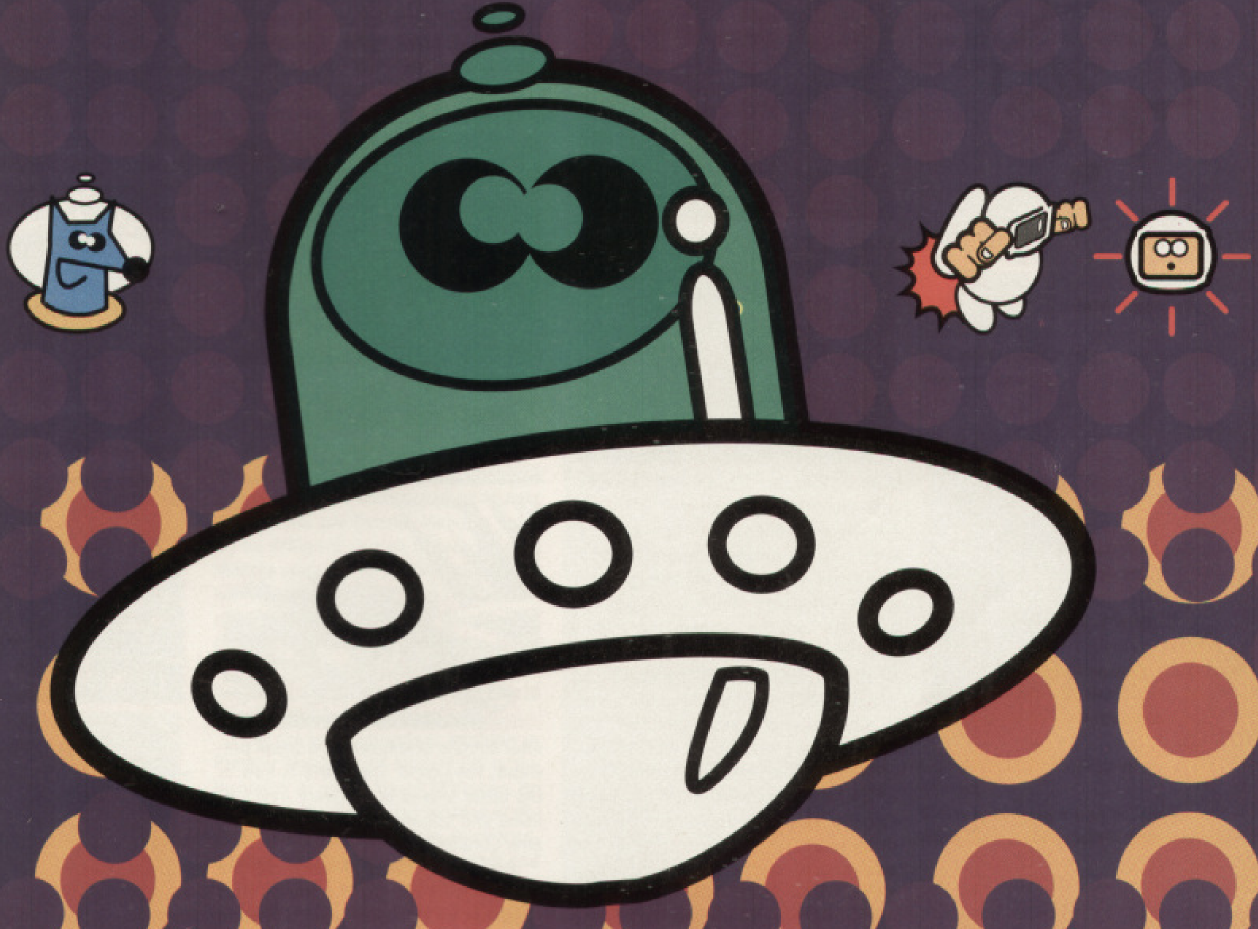


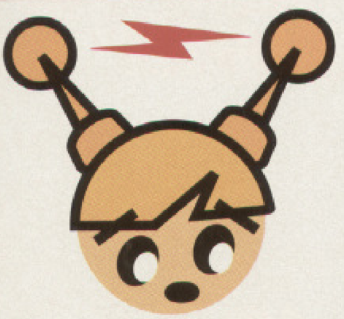
...THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

1995 will see the first year that the PC truly becomes a mass-market games machine. Softcos, wary of supporting declining formats such as the Amiga, perceive the PC as the only growth market.

For the first time ever, arcade games and simple shoot-'em-ups are being developed first on the PC and then converted to the other machines. Of course, shoot-'em-ups and arcade games aren't necessarily the kind of titles we'd like to see, which is why it's encouraging to learn that there'll be plenty of Ecstaticas and Magic Carpets in 1995.

Yup, here's a lot to look forward to next year. Just feast your eyes on these...

...THE SHAPE OF THINGS



JANUARY

Bioforge

Origin — January

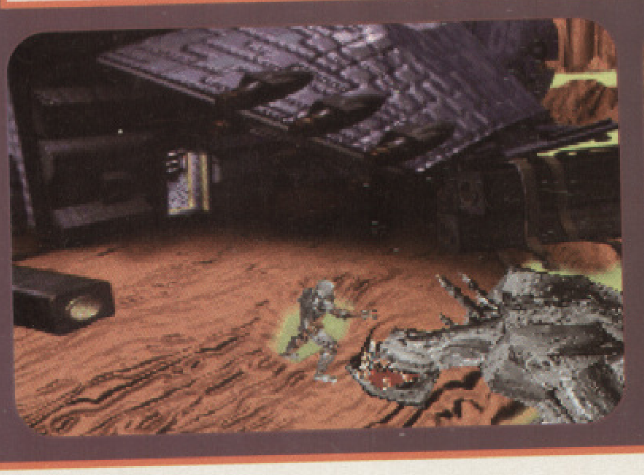
Initially due for release during 1994, BioForge has slipped back to '95 as Origin struggle to create what they hope will be the World's first truly interactive movie. It's very different from previous so-called interactive movies though, having dispensed with the usual second-rate B-movie thespians in favour of what Origin call "synthetic actors".

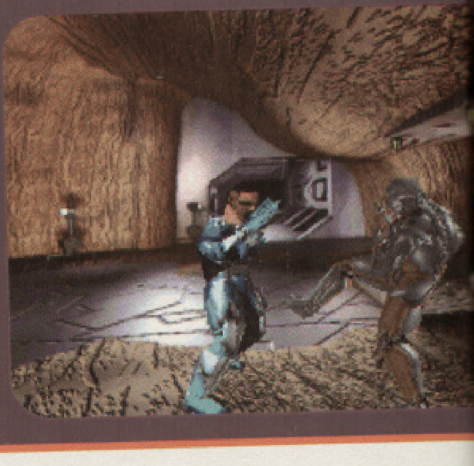
Controlling one of these synthetic guys, a cyborg called Lex, BioForge is a sort of futuristic version of Alone In The Dark. Like AITD, you have total control over Lex, rather than occasionally interacting and telling him to turn left or right.

However, exploring the alien colony you are dumped in is just one of the many aspects of this gripping action/adventure game. Lex must solve tricky puzzles to pass safely through the hostile space station, occasionally resorting to a variety of hi-tech laser rifles and pistols to fend off the weird creatures which patrol the complex.

Using fixed backdrops which were initially created in 3D Studio then rendered from various angles, the game engine itself decides when to cut between viewpoints depending on the action Lex is attempting to perform. Amazingly, Lex is completely free to interact with the backgrounds, and has the ability to manipulate almost any object he encounters.

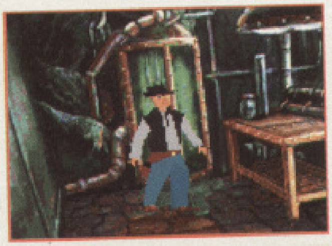
It's this degree of freedom, combined with lavish presentation and absorbing gameplay, that looks set to make BioForge one of next year's biggest releases.

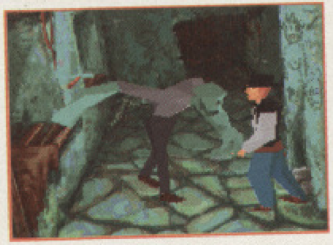




Alone In The Dark 3

Infogrames — January

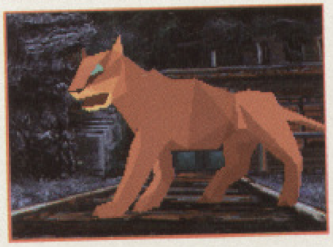




Without a doubt, this is the most eagerly awaited PC title of the year — and it's coming out in less than two months' time! As I'm sure you're aware, Alone In The Dark 3 finishes off the popular series with an adventure that takes the best bits from the previous two games (the tense, claustrophobic atmosphere of the first AITD, and the style and graphical finesse of the second), lumps in a new scenario and characters, and ups the 'scary factor' by at least 100%.

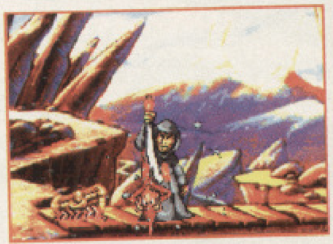
Set in a Wild West ghost town, Alone In The Dark 3 sees the return of Edward Carnby as the ever-valiant private detective. During the course of the adventure, we're promised more emphasis on puzzle solving than fighting (something that couldn't be said about AITD2) and a sneaky peak at the 'next generation' of Alone In The Dark games, as Infogrames premiers its latest all-singing, all-dancing, all-prancing 3D polygon routines.

Having learnt what works and what doesn't, thanks to its experience with the first two AITDs, we're confident that Alone In The Dark 3 will be a fitting end to a brilliant trilogy — and rapidly establish itself as the scariest PC game ever.



Discworld

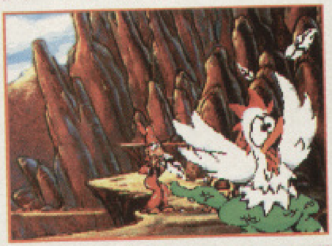
Psygnosis — January

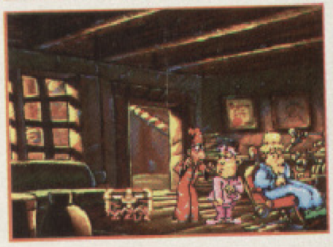


After months of snippets and sneak previews, Psygnosis' Discworld is now in the latter stages of software development and should be released shortly after Christmas.

By now you could probably reel the game's storyline off the top of your head, but for the uninitiated, Discworld is a point'n'click graphic adventure based around Terry Pratchett's hilarious Discworld novels. Featuring the voices of Monty Python's Eric Idle, Blackadder's Tony Robinson and Dr Who's John Pertwee, Discworld's witty script was written by a professional comedy writer, so expect humour by the bucket-load (unless the writer in question is Carla Lane).

With some absolutely gorgeous backdrops and wonderfully-animated characters, Discworld looks set to give the LucasArts and Sierras of this world a run for their money.



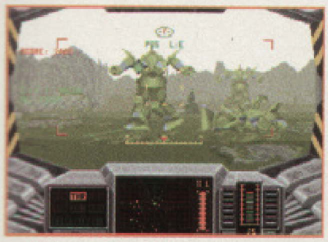


Iron Assault

Virgin — January

Virgin kicks off its most hectic PC release schedule ever with this futuristic robot combat simulation where present-day weapons meet the explosives of tomorrow.

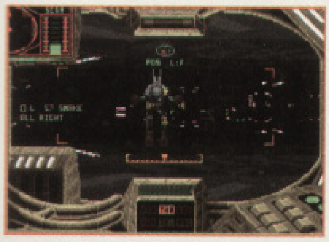
TO COME!!!



Commanding a huge metal monster — over one hundred tons worth, to be precise — it's your job to rid the world of a greedy corporation, whose military research has equipped it with an almost limitless supply of weapons. Your powerful assault vehicle may sound big and clumsy, but it has the shape and versatility of a humanoid.

By completing a string of action-heavy missions, the player's finances and ranks increase, the choice of equipment and weaponry improves, classified information becomes more readily available, and the focus shifts to strategic planning more worthy of a leader capable of overthrowing the oppressors.

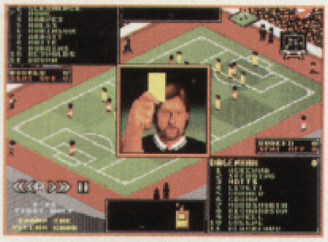
Actually, it looks like you lot are going to be in for a lot of these intense struggles against futuristic corporations (see Iron Angel and Syndicate 2, for example). Which one will emerge as the best, though, is a question best suited to this time next year. See you then.



Premier Manager 3

Gremlin — January

Premier Manager promises to be the biggest and best of the incredibly popular series. The game may not look that different to its predecessors, but underneath its glossy exterior lie some brilliant new features, all of which should ensure the game establishes itself as one of the most popular footy management games around.



We should now accept as standard the fact that football management games come with statistics as up-to-date as possible, and Premier Manager 3 will be no different (we've heard rumours that the stats will be updated less than a week before the game's release — phew, eh?). The in-match display has been altered since PM2 and now takes the form of matchstick players on a pseudo isometric-3D pitch, which should highlight defensive gaps and such.

But the most important addition to Premier Manager 3's feature list is the inclusion of an Assistant Manager. He helps with the day-to-day running of the club, giving you more time to concentrate on building up a decent team and analysing the transfer markets.

Look out for a full review of this one next issue.

1995 At A Glance!

JANUARY

Bioforge
Origin

Discworld
Psygnosis

Dungeon Master II
Interplay
The sequel to the *original* first-person RPG is due out in just over a month!

Flight Of The Amazon Queen
Renegade
A graphic adventure which looks like Indy Jones and has the feel of Monkey Island.

Hardball 4
Accolade
The fourth in the classic baseball series.

Heroes Of Might And Magic
US Gold
Continuing the popular Might & Magic series, this instalment promises hours of hack-'n'-slashing for the avid role-player.

High Seas Trader
Impressions
High Seas Trader is a, um, trading game set on the, ah, high seas. Obvious really.

Iron Assault
Virgin

The Last Dynasty
Sierra
A graphic adventure with loads of not-at-all-gratuitous full-motion video.

Lost In Town
Sierra
Remember Coktel's Lost In Time? Well, this is the sequel, but now you're lost in a town.

Mission Critical
Accolade
Legend delve into the sci-fi genre with a graphically stunning futuristic adventure.

Multimedia Celebrity Poker
US Gold
Play five-card stud against (not particularly) well-known celebs and starlets.

Premier Manager 3
Gremlin

Red Ghost
Empire
From Maelstrom, creators of Lords Of Midnight, Red Ghost combines absorbing strategy with nifty presentation.

Scottish Open Virtual Golf
Core Design
Core's first attempt at a golf game will be a pick-up-and-play sim, so you don't have to be a golfer to understand it!

The Scroll
Millennium
Utilising Millennium's new game engine, The Scroll is an adventure set in Egypt.

Sensible Golf
Virgin

Slipstream
Gremlin Interactive

Space Quest VI
Sierra
Interstellar janitor Roger Wilco returns for his sixth hilarious outing.

Super Streetfighter II
US Gold

Stonekeep
Interplay

FEBRUARY

Alien Breed Tower Assault
Team 17
Man meets monster for more xenophobic overhead blasting.

Alone In The Dark 3
Infogrames

Brett Hull '95
Accolade
Take to the ice in this '95 season update of the fast-paced hockey game.

Champ. Manager Italia '95
Domark
Slip on your fur-lined sheepskin jacket and manage your very own dream team. The aim of the game? Don't get sacked...

Command & Conquer
Virgin
Slowly build up your army and then slaughter the enemy in this wargame.

Dark Forces
Virgin

Frontlines
Impressions
Yup, it's a strategy game. No other details are known a at the time of going to press.

Hammer Of The Gods
US Gold
Explore, raid and pillage your way into Valhalla in NWC's Viking epic.

Jet Ski Rage
US Gold
Like, you're on a jet ski and you're ragin'.

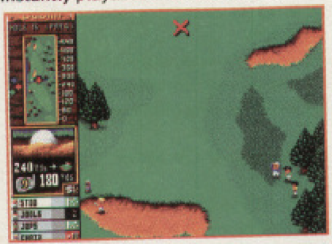
King Pin Bowling
Team 17
"It's a fun multi-player ten-pin bowling game with a great budget price" claims Team 17's Alan Bunker. 'Nuff said.

Sensible Golf

Virgin — January

PC golf games have traditionally been grand 3D texture-mapped efforts with more Options than a range of slimming products (you see, that capital 'o' is in there for a reason). There have been some notable successes — MicroProse Golf is regarded by many as the benchmark for this genre, and you'd be hard pushed to find a more playable simulation than the original PGA Tour Golf.

However, none have used a top-down view. Until now, that is. Sensible Golf, from those bonkers guys at Sensible Software, is to golf games what Sensible Soccer was to, um, football games. Steering well clear of all the technical guff that has plagued many golf sims, Sensible Golf promises to be instantly playable and fun to boot.



This unusual approach is one which Sensible Software hopes will appeal to golfers and non-golfers alike. But don't think that because the game has funny graphics, it won't be as accurate as other golf games. This simple isn't true — the Sensi boys have made a point of bunking off work to spend as much time on the course as possible. Which is probably why the game is slightly late.

Up to four players (human or computer) can participate and — unique to Sensi Golf — each is visible on the course at the same time. There are 20 courses to try your luck at, with an option to zoom-in on the golfers for a more detailed look at the lie of the ball.

It seems hard to envisage a scenario where Sensible Golf will be anything other than excellent. The team's track record is nothing short of impressive, and this release should prove that they can turn their hands to anything. Roll on Sensible Darts.

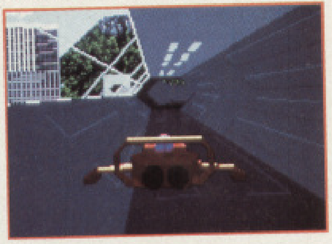
Slipstream

Gremlin — January

Victoria Venice
2 Player

The first of Gremlin's January 'double whammy' is a futuristic flight-sim-cum-driving-game. Looking much like an updated version of Powerdrome, Slipstream will enable you to take part in a number of illegal and highly dangerous races in a number of different vehicles. There'll be a two-player split screen option as well, for that 'Doom-with-vehicles'-type action.

We've seen an early version of the game running, and everything — at this stage at least — appears to be in order (indeed, one of our party remarked that he was having "great fun"). Obviously we'll leave our official opinion until next issue, when you can expect a full review.



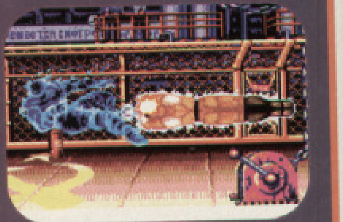
Super Streetfighter II

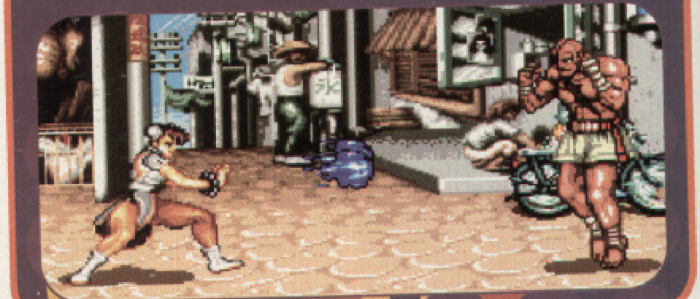
US Gold — January

As Kylie and company kick ass in the Streetfighter movie which is currently nearing completion, US Gold are adding the final touches to the PC version of the new, bigger, beefier Streetfighter II game.

Appearing almost a year after it originally appeared on the consoles to wild critical acclaim, SSF II boasts a bundle of new features, including four new fighters like Kylie's alter-ego, Cammy. There's also the kick-boxer Dee Jay Maximum, the towering T. Hawk and lastly the small-but-powerful Fei Long. Additionally, existing fighters are blessed with a range of new attacks and special moves like Ken's awesome Flaming Dragon Punch.

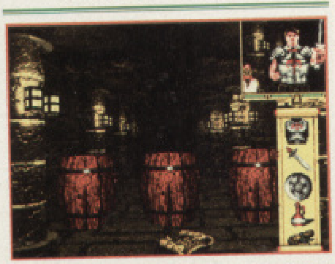
Converting a game suited to the more arcade-friendly consoles is no pushover. Cramming the massive array of kicks, punches and combat-combos onto a two-button joystick *and* making it playable is virtually impossible, but it looks like Birmingham-based giants US Gold have just about done it.





Stonekeep

Interplay — January



Stonekeep has been in development for *years*! Previewed at the European Computer Show many moons ago, Interplay have since been perfecting the final product and now, some time down the line, it finally looks as though their stunning 3D RPG will eventually see the light of day.

Originally best known for their Bards Tales series and more recently the Star Trek adventures, Interplay have created a role-playing game which they believes will "set the industry on its ear". Sounds painful.

But enough of the boasting, this is roughly what the game is all about. The Shadow King and his hideous legion of evil have nabbed the Orbs Of Life, so the Goddess Thera has chosen you to get them back. Naturally, this entails lots of exploring dank tunnels, solving the puzzles and hacking any nasties you come across.

As you'll no doubt agree, this is all exciting stuff. as Stonekeep's producers Michael Quarles explains: "We did everything we could think of to make Stonekeep as engaging as possible. We removed awkward keyboard controls so now your movement is controlled with just four cursor keys and a mouse.

"We shot tons of film footage and used blue screen cinematography to ensure the realism of our effects. The player watches the action unfold on a full-screen monitor — there are no modes to switch between or menus to distract from the game. The animation and 3D renderings are incredible. We've designed everything to totally immerse the player in the game".

Ambitious claims indeed from Interplay. Whether they prove true or not remains to be seen when Stonekeep is unleashed at the beginning of next year.

FEBRUARY

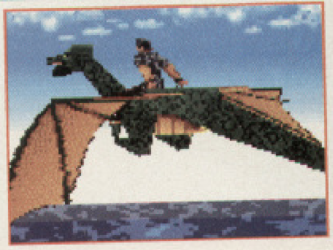
Dark Forces

LucasArts — February

Aaaiiieeee! It's Doom! But with Star Wars characters in it! How can it possibly fail?

Lords Of Midnight: The Citadel

Domark — February



LOOK OUT FOR

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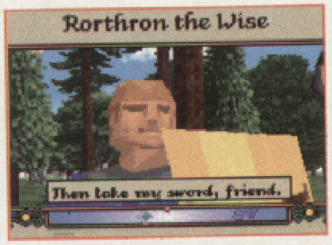
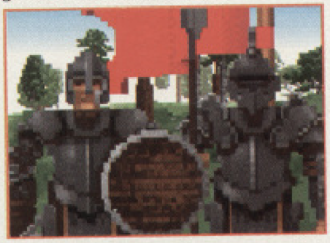


Released over ten years ago on the Spectrum, Mike Singleton's Lords Of Midnight is due to appear soon on your trusty PC. But rather than simply converting the ancient 1984 game, Maelstrom have created an all-new adventure set much later than the original product.

For a start, the PC version's lavish presentation towers above the old Speccy's colour-clash graphics. Now Lords Of Midnight, subtitled The Citadel, uses a similar Voxel Space technique as Comanche to create the game's treacherous terrain.



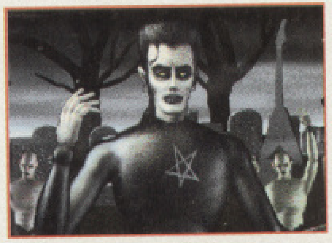
Initially commanding a team of six soldiers, the size of your army will gradually increase as villagers are recruited by either chatting or threatening them with your sword.

One of the game's most unique features is the time-lock option which, put simply, means the game will run in realtime using your PC's internal clock. So, for example, if you switch off your machine and don't play The Citadel for a week or so, a week will have past in the game when you finally return. Blimey, could this be the first computer game which will quite happily play by itself without any human interaction?

Total Distortion

Mindscape — February

Mindscape has plenty of PC titles up its sleeves, the first of which is this strange graphic-adventure-cum-video-jukebox type thingy. In Total Distortion, you play a record producer lost in another dimension, and your job is to make enough money to return to your original abode.



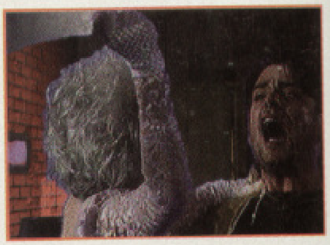
But you don't do this by entertaining businessmen or selling The Big Issue — nope, Total Distortion gives you the chance to build a successful music business. Bands have to be signed up and decent records released in order to generate the amount of income necessary for the one-way trip back home.

With original music and an even more original premise, Total Distortion will either be a spectacular success, or a spectacular failure. However, we currently favour the former. Our minds never close — even on Sundays.

MARCH

11th Hour

Virgin — March



Mortal Kombat 2

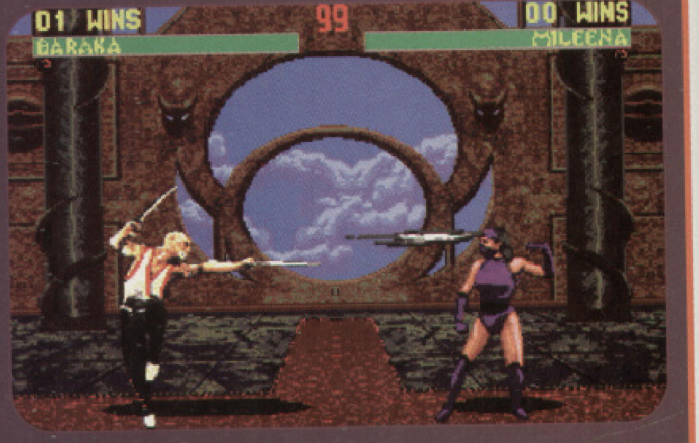
Acclaim — February

If violent fighting games are your cup of tea, then you won't get much more violenter than Mortal Kombat 2 when it's released in February. The sequel to the hugely-successful Mortal Kombat has received rave reviews from the console magazines, and the PC conversion looks to be shaping up to be just as good.

So what's new? Well, now the game features twelve fighters instead of the first's eight. And the crap characters from the first game, like Sonya, have been booted out in favour of super-hard combatants such as Shang Tsung, Kitana and Baraka, a bald-headed baddy who is very well endowed in the fang department.

The much-loved fatalities have also been re-vamped, and now each character can pull off at least two nasty moves. On top of this, there are much nicer 'friendship' moves where the winning character gives the loser a gift, and the 'babalities' where the defeated fighter is turned into a blubbing infant.

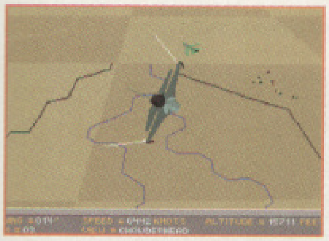
With top developer Probe once again at the helm (and it did a fantastic job with the original conversion), it's hard to envisage the PC version being anything less than brilliant.



The sequel to 7th Guest has constantly slipped since news of its development was first revealed. This, one hopes, can only be a good thing, as it'll give the programmers more time to tweak and hone the gameplay. It's still a fair way off, but look out for more news on thi next month.

Falcon 4

Microprose — March



Forget your Tornados and your TFXs, if it's a *real* flight sim you're after look no further than Falcon.

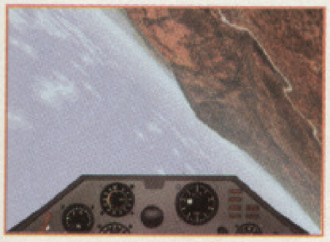
Claimed by many to be *the* flight sim to beat all others, MicroProse and developers Spectrum Holobyte have undertaken a difficult task and are currently working on a follow-up to the near-perfect Falcon 3.

Chatting to MicroProse's PR bod Jason Dutton revealed little, although what you can expect from Falcon 4 is essentially more of the same gripping stuff, but this time in glorious Super VGA. There will be loads more missions to fly, plus they'll be a link-up option allowing two or more pilots to dogfight across a network.

With the previous Falcon games proving wildly successful, we can only keep our fingers crossed that the fourth instalment follows suit.

Flight Unlimited

Virgin — March



Flight sim fans are going to wet their trousers when they see Flight Unlimited moving. For it is, without a shadow of a doubt, the most visually impressive plane game the world has ever seen. And it's only 40% finished!

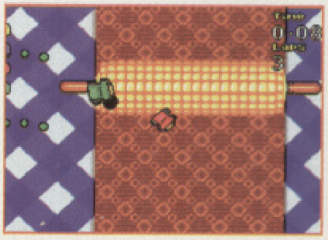
What makes Flight Unlimited different to the rest is its graphics. The entire gameworld consists of pieced-together photos of a place that actually exists. As the player takes his plane through a series of stunts, the images are pulled off the disc and manipulated so that you can fly wherever you want with no noticeable glitches or inconsistencies.

The effect is absolutely stunning. At this stage in the game's development, the code is far from optimised, but it's still running pretty quickly considering what the program's actually doing. Come March, the developers hope to get the game running smoothly on a 33MHz 486. Obviously this is going to restrict the user base — but as the industry embraces newer technology, this is inevitable. A price worth paying, we think.

It's rumoured that Flight Unlimited has been targeted by the manufacturers of PC VR helmets in order to ensure compatibility when the add-on is released. If this is the case then start saving now — Flight Unlimited will put the arcade VR machines to shame.

Micro Machines 2

Codemasters — March



Games don't come much more simple than the Mega Drive version of Micro Machines, CodeMaster's incredibly-playable racing game. And while the PC version lacked that certain 'something' so abundant on the Sega machine, it was still entertaining in the short term at least.

Hopefully CodeMasters will be able to rectify things when Micro Machines 2 is released in March. It takes the basic theme from the first game — which basically involves racing around various household locations in very small vehicles — but adds a number of frills which guarantee this should be the white knuckle ride of '95.

Forget racing around things such as sand pits and snooker tables — try winning a quick sprint round a pinball table (complete with working flippers which

1995 At A Glance!

Kingdom
Interplay
An adventure game with stunning cartoon-qaulity animated graphics.

Lords Of Midnight: The Citadel
Domark

Mortal Kombat II
Acclaim

Overdrive
Team 17
Converted from the Amiga, Overdrive is an arcade-style top-down racing game.

Powerhouse
Impressions
Powerhouse is a strategy game but no details are known about the game as yet.

Psycho Pinball
Codemasters
A funky pinball game from the Codies, which promises to be a darn sight better than all the others doing the rounds.

Renegade: The Battle For Jacob's Star
Mindscape
SSI's interstellar blaster based on the top-selling FASA board game.

Silverload
Millennium
Silverload is a werewolf western. Well, that's what Millennium's PR guy says...

Space Academy
Mindscape
An isometric-3D puzzle/adventure combo.

Thunderhawk
Core Design
A PC update of the old Amiga chopper sim, with the accent on action.

Total Distortion
Mindscape

Virtua Chess
Titus
Titus challenge Kasparov's Gambit at the original thinking man's game, chess.

Buried In Time
US Gold
Expect gorgeous ray-traced graphics in this sequel to The Journeyman Project.

Cerberus
Domark
Yet another PC adventure game, this one just happens to be set in space.

Deadline
Millennium
A hostage negotiation sim. Interesting...

Empire & Exploration
Interplay
"I haven't a clue what it's all about" admitted Interplay's Alyson Goddard. "We're getting some information on it soon though". Great.

Falcon 4
MicroProse

Flight Unlimited
Virgin

Incoming
Millennium
"It's a deep space mystery", offered Keith from Millennium. Righty-ho.

Innocent Until Caught 2
Psygnosis
Continues the wacky adventures of Jack T. Ladd — play our demo now!

The Jungle Book
Virgin
Join Mowgli and become king of the swingers in this furious platform romp.

Lost Eden
Virgin
Defeat the carnivores before they eat everything in sight, in this graphically orgasmic point-'n'-click adventure.

Mechwarrior 2: The Clans
Activision
Strap yourself into a giant robot and battle against the computer or human opponent via a modem.

Micro Machines 2
Codemasters

Phantasmagoria
Sierra

Phoenix Fighter
Time Warner Interactive
It's a graphic adventure. Apparently.

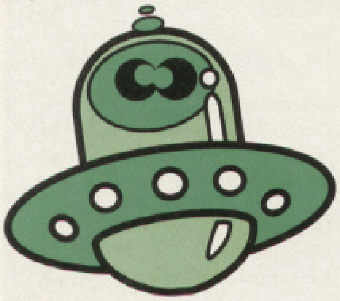
Planetfall
Activision
Sequel to the sci-fi text adventure, Planetfall has been given the Hollywood treatment and is now a multimedia epic with a cast of over 20 'top' actors.

MARCH

11th Hour
Virgin

Absolute Zero
Domark
Er, it's a space sim.

American Civil War
Empire
3D battlefields, texture-mapped and Gouraud shaded-terrain, strategy... Empire's new war game has the lot.

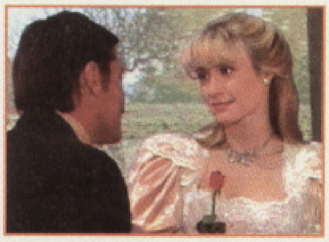


flick your car if you get too close) or over a xylophone with vicious beaters.

If the scrolling and artificial intelligence are up to par then Micro Machines 2 looks like being a winner. The multi-player mode will certainly cause the break-up of a few friendships, that's for sure.

Phantasmagoria

Sierra — March



Phantasmagoria is a far cry from Roberta Williams' previous adventures, namely the sickeningly-sweet series of King Quest games. Long gone are the fairy tale plots and oh-so-cute cartoon-style graphics, to be replaced by full-motion video, horror stories and *loads* of gore!

According to Sierra, Phantasmagoria is, dare I say it, an interactive movie which is set in an eerie old house which once belonged to a magician. He was far from Paul Daniels though, revelling in torturing his faithful wife rather than pulling white rabbits from a hat. Nowadays the magician has long since gone, leaving the house enshrouded in mystery. This leaves you, as the heroine Adrienne, to work out just what the hell is going on.

Sierra, quite suprisingly, is playing down the horror element of the game, insisting it is integral to the plot rather than simply a dirty ploy to get PC gamers' attention. However, at the moment they are contemplating a cut option which basically eliminates any of the blood and guts.

That said, Phantasmagoria is most definitely not the perfect birthday present to give to your young, impressionable sprog. Swallow your pride and get the Mr Blobby video instead. (Er, on the other hand...)

Star Trek: The Next Generation

Microprose — March

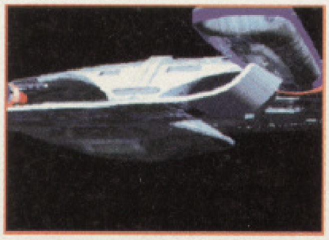
Paramount Television took a brave risk releasing Star Trek: The Next Generation almost eight years ago, considering Trekkies are renown for being protective of their coveted 60s sci-fi series. A new programme featuring a brand new cast, new storylines and a different Enterprise could have caused uproar, but the reaction was quite the opposite. It was well received and now, seven series later, it still tops the American TV charts.

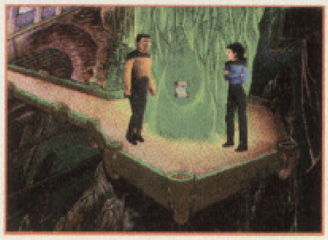
So it's an obvious choice for a computer game then, the rights for which Spectrum Holobyte promptly snapped up. That was over a year ago and now this CD-only graphic adventure is almost nearing completion.

Unlike previous 8-bit Star Trek games and even Interplay's pair of adventures (25th Anniversary and Judgment Rites), TNG has a distinct futuristic feel to it. This is probably down to the game's lush rendered graphics, which include realistic 3D images of each of the Enterprises main characters including Picard, Riker, and so on.

Proving far from linear, you have almost complete freedom to explore the entire galaxy and take the Enterprise where you want to go, rather than following step-by-step orders issued by Star Fleet command. All too often you'll have to leave the comfort of the Enterprise and teleport to another location, assembling a suitable party to tackle the many perils that lurk on the planet surface below.

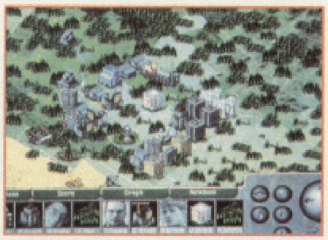
Of course, with the entire crew of the Enterprise under your control, the role of Captain Jean-Luc Picard is no pushover. Only someone of superior intellect and stature could fill his shoes. Are you up to the job?





Sim Rainforest

Maxis — March

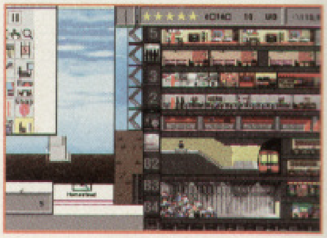


In perhaps the most unusual 'Sim' to date, Maxis's forthcoming environmental simulation puts you in charge of — yes! — a rainforest. David's seen an early version of the game running and had this to say: "It looks exactly like any other Sim game. But with trees in it."

Of course, this is no bad thing. Every single Sim title has sold by the bucketload and received equal amounts of critical and commercial acclaim. And we suspect this will be the case with Sim Rainforest.

Sim Tower

Maxis — March



While the disasters in SimCity were adequate, there were no terrorist threats, gigantic gorillas, cockroach infestations or appearances of Santa Claus (if you

APRIL

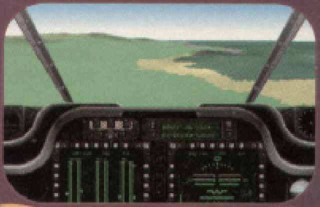
Apache Gunship

Digital Integration — April

Best known for their hyper-realistic flight simulator Tornado, Digital Integration now present a brand new challenge — Apache Gunship. Like Tornado, DI's newie is also a flight sim, but this time you get to pilot an agile helicopter rather than a warplane. In fact, you're strapped into the World's most advanced combat helicopter, the AH-64 Apache.

According to Debbie Durrant, DI's delectable PR exec, Apache will be more user-friendly than Tornado and will therefore appeal to a wider audience, promising to "pull the player quickly into the thick of down-in-the-dirt action without ever compromising authenticity and depth of gameplay". All compelling stuff, but what really impresses are the game's slick Super VGA graphics and massive game area which covers over 1.9 million square miles! Whooooh!

The first product to use Digital Integration's latest super-fast 3D engine, Apache looks to be visually unchallenged, with superb detail as the chopper skims low across the terrain. There's also the built-in mission planner to sink your teeth into, as well as a multi-player network option which will grab the attention of the more experienced player.



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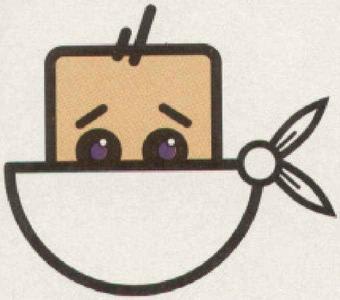
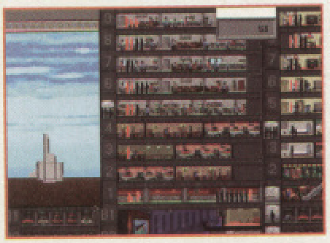


can call that a disaster). Maxis has obviously realised its mistake — hence the appearance of SimTower.

And guess what SimTower, erm, simulates? Yep — life in a tower.

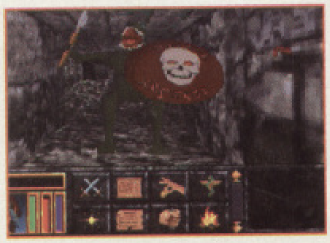
Beginning life as a mere single-star rated single-level office building, it's your job to expand to a multi-level self-contained city in a skyscraper. You can assign names to your tenants and watch their daily living patterns to evaluate how to improve the design of your building.

Again, not much concrete fact is known about this release, apart from the fact that it's going to be huge. In every sense of the word.



Elder Scrolls 2: Daggerfall

US Gold — April



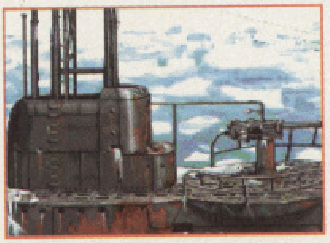
If you hadn't already guessed, Daggerfall is the second chapter in the highly-acclaimed Elder Scrolls series. For those unfamiliar with Elder Scrolls, the first game, Arena (shown above), was a smart RPG which, I suppose, could be described as Doom with swords. Anyway, the second game is much the same, although there will be a variety of new features which Bethesda are currently slotting into place.

One of the game's all-new attractions is the fully-contoured landscape which, so I'm told, looks absolutely wonderful. There are also loads of computer-controlled characters to interact with, from whom you can glean vital information about the quest ahead just by casually chatting to them.

Another of Daggerfall's all-new features is the option to import any characters used in the original game, so owners of Arena can put their veteran warriors to good use once again. Add to this the load of new spells available, as well as the game's trading element (during the game you can own land, property and ships, and can trade all sorts of goods to make money) and what you have is (hopefully) a corker of a game.

Prisoner Of Ice

Infogrames — April

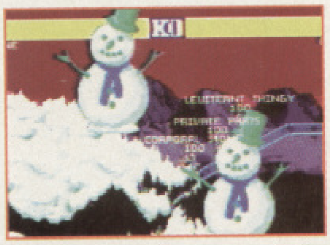


Another H.P. Lovecraft-inspired adventure, Prisoner Of Ice is set in the days of the Second World War, and suggests that the Nazis had been experimenting with the supernatural in order to gain the upper hand in the conflict.

Lots of horror and frights are promised, as well as the usual puzzle solving that die-hard adventure fans love. Interestingly, there'll be two possible endings — which you select — depicting a cheery outcome, or one much more sinister.

Worms

Team 17 — April



One thing Worms has over most other PC games is originality. Probably the best way to describe Team 17's latest is that it's a cross between Lemmings and Cannon Fodder. Oh and, as you can imagine, there are worms by the bucket-load.

Controlling a platoon of four worms, the basic aim is to nuke the other three armies who lie in wait across a huge multi-directional scrolling landscape. Each team comes fully equipped with a huge array of weapons, including bazookas, homing missiles, dynamite and hand grenades. In addition, worms can also Dragon Punch and chuck fireballs, all of which are accompanied by explosive sound effects and some excellent speech.

The landscapes featured in the game are randomly generated and can be anything from dense forests to icy plains. Each land will contain features unique to each specific scene, and the finished product will contain a password system should you want to regenerate a particular landscape.

Other features of the game include the ability to call in air-strikes on enemy positions and also enable the worms to swim underwater. With an option for up to 16 human players, Team 17 are confident that Worms will be *the* most playable game of 1995. And having played a preview version, we're inclined to agree.

Sensible World Of Soccer

Renegade — April

Most people agree that Sensible Soccer is the best arcade football simulation on any computer. Well, come next Easter, opinions are likely to have changed when Sensible World Of Soccer is released. SWOS is basically the arcade part of Sensible Soccer (with a few tweaks, of course), coupled with the most comprehensive guide to global soccer the world has ever seen.

You can play SWOS as either an out-and-out arcade game much like its predecessor, a management game much like Premier Manager 2 or On The Ball,

Full Throttle

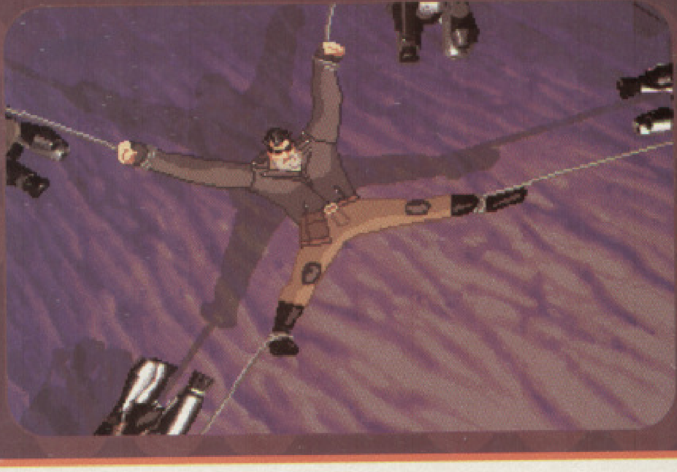
LucasArts — May

Having cornered the market in graphic adventures, LuacasArts has decided to take a slightly different route with this Summer release and include a fully-playable driving game as well.

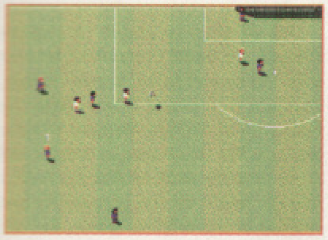
Actually, that's not quite true. Full Throttle is, for the most part, a traditional graphic adventure with plenty of objects to point and click at. But in certain sections of the game, Full Throttle's hero has to leap on to his motorbike and race to a new location — making way for some reaction-testing set pieces.

Expect the now traditional LucasArts high-quality polish. A more advanced version of its point-'n'-click interface is also promised, making object manipulation much simpler. The game has a more cartoon-y feel to it than the Stateside developer's previous efforts, making it arguably the best-looking adventure it's ever produced. And when you consider LucasArts' back catalogue, this is quite an accolade.

Although the game is a long way off, there's one thing we can say with some certainty: if anyone else is thinking of releasing a graphic adventure in 1995, make sure it hits the streets before Full Throttle. You have been warned.



or a combination of the two. This is where the fun really begins. By taking control of a team from any one of the world's lower divisions, it's your job to work your way up to National team coach and win the World Cup. Okay, so you could do this in almost any of the football management games currently doing the rounds — but none allow you to actually *play* the matches as an arcade game does.



With over 22,000 players, each with numerous statistics, and every major competition from every league in the world, Sensible World Of Soccer really does look like becoming the computer game for lovers of football and decent games alike. The original sold like FA Cup Final tickets and, if justice is done, this version will outdo even that. For once there's more to look forward to at Easter than chocolate eggs and acne.

MAY

Iron Angel

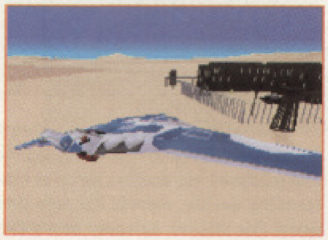
Ocean — May

Described as "the flight sim of the future," by Ocean's PR geeza Nick Clarkson, Iron Angel takes the basic Syndicate premise (you know the kind of thing — the world is being run by four massive global corporations, and it's your job to sort them out or something) and constructs a snazzy 3D combat epic around it.

As part of an elite UN Force, you have several glorified Transformers at your disposal in which to destroy all things bad. Things are pretty easy at first, as your futuristic weapons are no match for the more conventional firepower used by the enemy.

But as the game progresses, so more and more devastating missiles and lasers become available to the enemy, making things (sadly) more evenly matched. In fact, the battle eventually spills over into space, as the planes become powerful enough to leave the Earth's atmosphere.

Ocean's stiffest competition is going to come from its own games. As TFX and Inferno have set new standards for flight sims and space epics, a hybrid of the two is going to have to be something special in order for the games-playing public to go mad over it. But if anyone can match the aforementioned gaming benchmarks, Ocean are the ones who stand the best chance of doing so.



UNCLE PETE'S
MINK RANCH
BA

1995 At A Glance!

Sim Rainforest
Maxis

Sim Tower
Maxis

Soup Trek
Krisalis
Krisalis didn't say much. However, we did manage to find out that Soup Trek is a sort of puzzle game.

Star Trek: TNG
MicroProse

Tank Commander
Domark
Take to the helm of a modern-day tank in this sim which boasts a VR link-up option.

Virtual Pool
Interplay
Rack 'em up for a challenging game of pool or snooker.

APRIL

Across The Rhine
MicroProse
Relive the Battle Of The Bulge in MicroProse's accurate tank sim.

Apache Gunship
Digital Integration

Cyberspace
Empire
A Cyberpunk RPG of Net-running and life in a violent metropolis.

Elder Scrolls 2: Daggerfall
US Gold

Legends
Krisalis
Remaining cagey about their forthcoming releases, Krisalis' Tim James reckons Legends "is a Zelda clone".

Player Of The Year
Krisalis
Krisalis steps up to the penalty spot for their shot at a football manager game.

Prisoner Of Ice
Infogrames

Sensible World Of Soccer
Renegade

Victoriana
Psygnosis
This "Phileas Fogg graphic adventure" is by Divide By Zero, the team who brought you Innocent Until Caught.

Werewolf
US Gold
Pitted against the might of Virgin's Hokum and DI's Apache, Werewolf is yet another helicopter simulator.

Worms
Team 17

Zonked
Psygnosis
An addictive block-shifting arcade puzzler that went down a storm on the Amiga.

MAY

Airship
Mindscape
By Rowan Software., this is a flight sim but with big balloons rather than planes.

Bazooka Sue
Krisalis
Krisalis offered this snippet of information — it's a graphic adventure. Oh.

Bugs
Mindscape
"It's a sort of wargame with bugs" offered Mindscape's PR guy James Morris.

Full Throttle
LucasArts

Iron Angel
Ocean

Lands Of Lore 2
Virgin
Westwood's forthcoming RPG is a 3D adventure with smart graphics.

Navy Strike
MicroProse
Yet another top air combat game from those masters of the sim genre.

Top Gun
MicroProse
Yup, it's loosely based on the film where hotshot pilot Tom Cruise goes supersonic with leggy instructor Kelly McGillis.

Warriors
Mindscape
A beat-'em-up from 'new boys' Atreid — see this month's news for more.

JUNE

K240
Gremlin Interactive

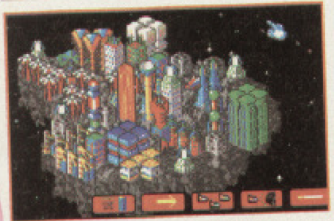
Little People
MicroProse
It's a god game, with lots of little people.

Machine Head
Core Design
Battle across fractal-generated terrains in your ED-209ish walker-thing.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
Activision
Follow-up to the VCS classic, this promises to be s visually-stunning platformer.

K240

Gremlin — May



Originally, K240 was designed to be the follow-up to Utopia, Gremlin's first stab at the God game. But as it neared completion, it was decided the game was strong enough to stand up on its own right. This decision proved right. K240 went on to receive loads of top marks from the Amiga mags, and subsequently sold in bucket-loads. Hurrahs all round!

The name is derived from the co-ordinates of the sector of space in which the player begins the game. By branching off and discovering new asteriods to colonise, the player's job is to create a self-running community which can exist in peace and out of harm's way. Unfortunately, several alien races have other ideas, so a bit of space battling is called for.

K240 works in a similar way to most of these strategy/combat games. By designing and building certain items or buildings, others become available and it's only through structured planning that victory can be reached. But the advantage K240 has over, say, The Settlers or even the Populous games, is that it's set in space. So boys who grew up on a diet of Star Wars washed down with a few litres of Star Trek will love it.

JUNE

"Z"

Renegade — June

Although Renegade has been pretty secretive about its 1995 release schedule, Sarah Tanser did let slip that there's a new Bitmap Brothers game due out in the Summer, currently codenamed "Z". This is indeed exciting stuff, not only because the Bitmap's games are generally ace, but also because the mystery title will be written specifically for PC.

There's no official explanation for this, but this does have to be a Good Thing. The Bitmaps have genearly produced arcade games which haven't really utilised the PC's fast processor. Does this mean the team are working on a completely new style of game? Who knows (apart from the Bitmaps), but this is the best indication yet that the PC is finally considered as a games machine, and one which can easily compete with the Amiga and the consoles.

JULY

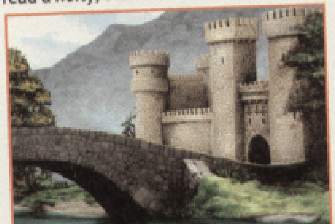
King Of Thieves

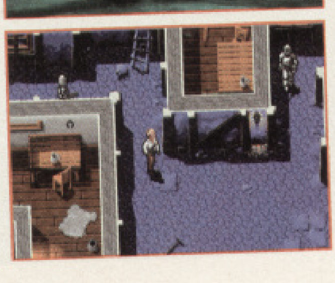
Team 17 — July

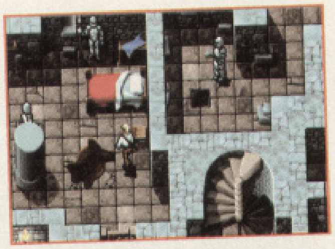
Created by the guys behind Alien Breed, King Of Thieves is Team 17's first product to be programmed specifically for the PC. Set way back in medieval England, King Of Thieves borrows strategy elements from the boardgame Risk and seamlessly blends them with numerous arcade-style sections in which the player must raise cash by raiding passing ships.

Essentially the objective of the game is to conquer as much of the land as possible, this being done by gradually building up your army and then attacking nearby enemy fortifications. As soon as the castle walls have been breached, a top-down combat sequence will whip the player into a frantic one-on-one battle with the enemy.

Combining attractive presentation and in-depth gameplay, King of Thieves is aimed at the kind of player who is looking for something with more depth than a shoot-'em-up, but doesn't really want to read a hefty, often tedious manual.





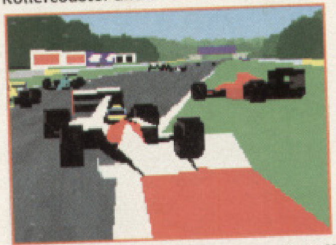


AUGUST

Formula One Grand Prix 2

Microprose — August

Remember Stunt Car Racer? If not, why not? It was arguably the Amiga's finest hour, combining slick visuals with unbelievably addictive gameplay (and that was just the one-player game). The game excelled in link-up mode, with two racers competing head-to-head around breath-taking tracks like Rollercoaster and The Ski Jump.



However, programmer Geoff Crammond refused to rest on his laurels and produced yet another game of outstanding quality, namely Formula One Grand Prix (above). Released nearly two years ago, F1GP led the field, dominating everything that had come before. Featuring amazingly-realistic polygon graphics, all the World Championship courses, and a variety of difficulty levels which made it suitable for gamers of all skills, it was — and still is — regarded as probably the best motor racing game on the PC.

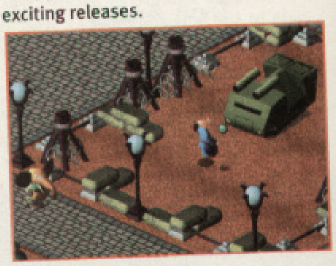
All of that is about to change though, as Geoff Crammond returns with the sequel titled, unsurprisingly, Formula One Grand Prix 2. With the inclusion of texture-mapped circuits and cars like those seen in IndyCar and more recently NASCAR Racing, F1GP 2 should retain all the playability and realism of the original game, but will be vastly improved thanks to these advanced graphical techniques.

SEPTEMBER

"New Game From Adeline"

Electronic Arts — September

Adeline have already started work on the follow-up to its quirky isometric-3D epic, Little Big Adventure (below). Very little... well, *nothing*, actually, is known about the game as yet, with Electronic Arts enshrouding the game in mystery. Nobody seems to know whether the game will be a sequel to LBA or a completely new product. However, if LBA is anything to go by, this promises to one of 1995's most eagerly awaited and exciting releases.



UFO: The Deep

Microprose — August

A well-received and surprisingly successful release which appeared during 1994, MicroProse's UFO: Enemy Unknown is a playable strategy effort in similar style to Laser Squad. Controlling a team of intergalactic marines, the aim of the game was simple: nuke the alien invaders, then nab their technologically-advanced equipment. Easy.

Well, the aliens have long since gone, but before you can say "Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's Dad", they're back. Yep, once again it's time to cue the eerie Twilight Zone music and journey into a land far, far away. Or something.

UFO: The Deep, although it's in the *very* early stages of the development at present, will remain essentially the same as the first release, although the game engine and graphics will be tweaked to make the game run more smoothly, which is good to know.

The plot behind The Deep is entirely different too. According to MicroProse's Jason Dutton, The Deep is "UFO meets The Abyss". Eh? Apparently the whole game is set under water, which is where the aliens have chosen to set up camp. With your trusty laser pistol in one hand and your ever-faithful mouse in the other, the task of ridding the world of this invading evil is down to you and your team of tough red-neck marines. Again.

BE THERE AT THE BIRTH OF A NATION

Sid Meier's
COLONIZATION

MICROPROSE

Sid Meier

DON'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS!

FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES

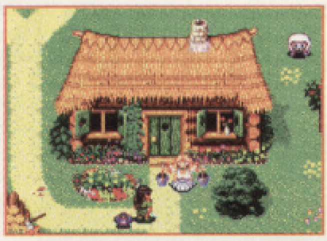
Witchwood

Team 17 — September

Team 17 bring their own style and finesse to the Zelda genre with Witchwood, which promises to feature some of the cutest, cuddliest graphics ever to grace the PC! Like Zelda, the game will scroll smoothly around rather than flipping from one scene to the next, while all dialogue on the CD version will be spoken rather than covering the screen with hideous text.

Controlling the sword-swinging hero Pip, the somewhat cliched aim of the game is to rescue a beautiful young princess who has been imprisoned by an evil, no doubt dog-ugly witch. While originality may have taken a back seat, Witchwood's emphasis is on playability and, more importantly, unrivalled gameplay.

Packed with cunning puzzles as well as life-threatening big nasties, the game is of truly gargantuan proportions. Pip must use magic to 'enter' the minds of animals and use them to advance through the game, so correct control over the wildlife is essential to the outcome. Hmm, sounds more like Doctor Doolittle.



NOVEMBER

Cyber

Ocean — November

Ocean's Nick Clarkson was firm but polite, insisting "there are no details on Cyber just yet". However, here at PC GAMES we do know that it's the latest brain-child of premier programmers DID (the developers behind the likes of TFX and Inferno) and that it will be a "Cyberpunk-style game". Whatever the final product blossoms into, Ocean guarantee Cyber is going to something just a *little* bit special.

Heart Of Darkness

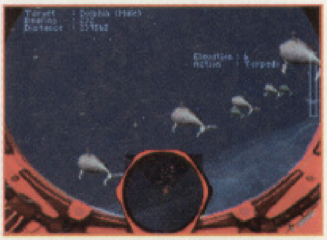
Virgin — November

Heart Of Darkness is yet another titled shadowed in mystery. Virgin bloke Doug Johns claimed he's "not allowed to give anything away". Mind you, he did-reveal that the game is being programmed by the bloke who done Another World and is an arcade game with loads of brilliant cut-scenes. Rest assured, we'll bring you more news as we get it.

DECEMBER

Creation

Bullfrog — December

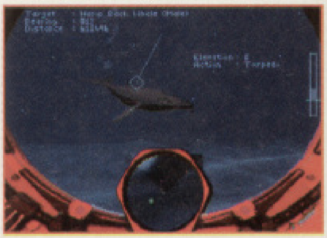


Creation is the Prince William of the PC games world — it's been born into this world with a distinct advantage over everything else. In fact, such is its head-start in life, Creation is already running while other games in production are trying to crawl. The reason for this? Simple: Creation's father is not someone with huge ears (and a tendency to snog women who resemble horses), but none other than Guildford-based Bullfrog, the PC's most innovative software developer.

Utilising the same game engine as the recently released (and 95%-rated) Magic Carpet, Creation is an underwater epic in which you must control an army of fish as it battles against other armies of fish. Or something.

We remember being treated to an extremely early sneaky peak of the game way back in late 1992, when Peter Molyneaux was just toying around with a new 3D routine he'd come up with. Even in its primitive form, we were blown away by Creation, and now — still a good nine months away — it's looking like being even better than its predecessor. Perhaps we're going to have to rethink the way we mark the games we review.

One interesting idea Peter was playing with when Magic Carpet was nearing completion was the ability to 'jump' from one game to another, provided both were installed on your hard drive. For example, you'd be able to fly to a nearby river or lake in Magic Carpet and plunge into the water, whereby your PC would automatically switch to Creation. You'll have to wait until the end of the year to see whether or not Bullfrog manages to implement this ground-breaking idea. Fingers crossed, eh?



Dungeon Keeper

Bullfrog — December

Not much is known about Bullfrog's first traditional RPG. Cathy Campos remains suitably tight-lipped when your reporter presses her for information. "Nope, we're not giving anything away," she stresses.

Okay, let's try another approach. Why is Bullfrog turning its attentions to the RPG genre now? "Let's just say that we thing the genre has become stuck in a groove — there haven't been any real innovations for ages. We intend to change that. Our game will be an RPG with a radical twist."

Whatever Dungeon Keeper turns out to be like, it will no doubt prove to be one of 95's big hits.

OCTOBER

Syndicate 2

Bullfrog — October

In late '93, after numerous God games, Bullfrog astonished the PC world with Syndicate, its ultra-violent strategic blaster which encouraged players to toast not-so-innocent enemy agents with flame throwers. And that was the nicer side of it all.

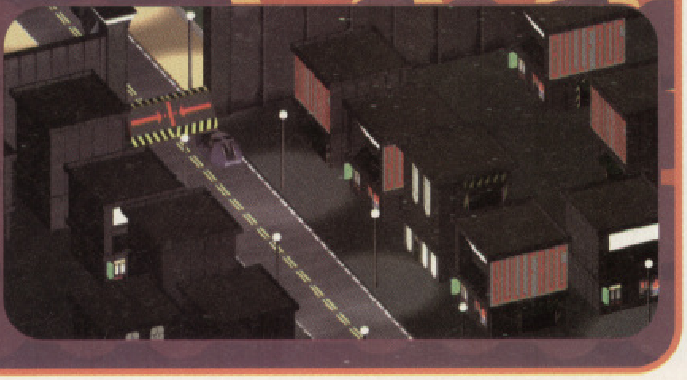
Many proclaimed it 'Game Of The Year' and its extraordinary commercial success came as no surprise. And with a game as popular as Syndicate, a sequel is almost inevitable. But the question must surely be: how will Bullfrog managed to improve on what was almost the perfect blaster?

"We've thought long and hard about this," says Bullfrog's PR guru Cathy Campos, "and whilst we're keen to keep some things close to our chest, I can reveal a few things. For a start, the game will be played using a slightly different viewpoint to the original. It's a kind of cross between top-down and isometric, and it enables the player to see more of the action.

"One major problem in Syndicate was it was impossible to see an agent on when he'd walked on the other side of a wall. In Syndicate 2, you'll be able to rotate the screen to show things from any angle, which gives us the opportunity to create more subtle traps and such.

"The game world is lit in such a way that it mimics real life. For example, you'll be able to blow away street lamps in order to plunge some areas into darkness. Oh, and you'll also be able to damage buildings."

Syndicate 2 is still very much in its infancy. The screenshots shown here are liable to change a great deal between now and the end of the year, but with Bullfrog's incredible track record, it's hard to imagine how this game can fail to be anything other than excellent.



"Chopper" (Working Title)

Ocean — December

Okay, so we EXCLUSIVELY revealed DID's Chopper last issue (and used loads of capital letters in the process), but it's still a year off and, as such, worthy of inclusion in this preview.

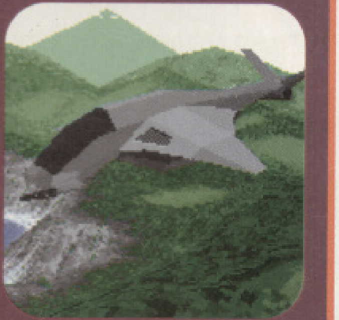
Imagine taking all the brilliant gameplay from TFX and cramming it all into a gameworld much, much smaller (it's been likened to squeezing a country into a county). Wouldn't that be ace? Rather than having time to think and space to manoeuvre in, the action would be far more intense, and make for some truly awe-inspiring set pieces.

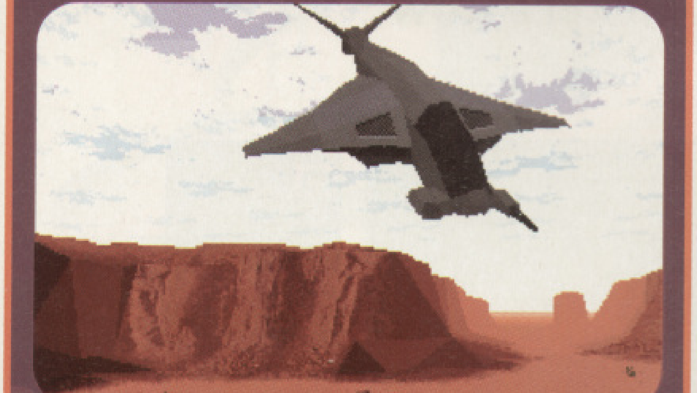
Welcome to the world of Chopper.

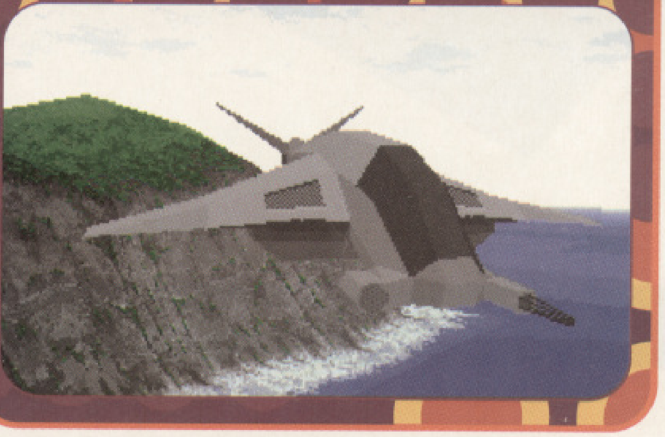
The game will be much more 'plot' driven than TFX, with the player assuming the role of an airforce test pilot. Everything — and we mean *everything* — will be texture-mapped, giving the most realistic terrains ever seen in a flight sim. This amount of realism has been possible because of DID's latest 3D routine which is bigger, better and faster than their previous ones (which were themselves stunning).

Rather than sticking solidly to a helicopter/plane game, DID has added a new twist — between missions you'll be able to leave your vehicle and wander around the base, talking to the other pilots and interacting with a variety of objects. You'll even be able to travel to other bases to learn more about your missions.

DID is calling this the world's first 'seamless' game — in theory you'll be able to play and play and play. And, 12 months off, we can already guarantee that you'll want to.







1995 At A Glance!

Transport Tycoon 2
MicroProse
A sequel which promises to be even more absorbing than the first Transport Tycoon.

"Z"
Renegade

JULY

King Of Thieves
Team 17

Ruff 'n' Tumble
Renegade
It's a platform game starring a little kid with a big gun.

Shell Shock
Core Design
"It's a tank game," lovely Suzie from Core told us — and no more.

AUGUST

3D Off-Road Racer
Team 17
"It's a bit like an off-road version of Daytona", Team 17 once said. We'll see.

Formula One Grand Prix 2
MicroProse

UFO: The Deep
MicroProse

SEPTEMBER

"New Zork Adventure"
Activision
Little is known about Infocom's latest project. It'll take you into "an entirely new dimension where you'll come face to face with an old enemy". As for the game itself, who knows?

"New Game From Adeline"
Electronic Arts

Primal Rage
Time Warner Interactive
The awesome coin-op makes the conversion to the PC courtesy of Time Warner. A beast of a beat-'em-up — literally.

Super TFX
Ocean
Updated and enhanced with Super VGA, this all-new version of TFX will also feature an eight-player link-up.

Witchwood
Team 17

OCTOBER

Aliens
Mindscape
Based on the successful Dark Horse comic and coming from Cryo, Mindscape reckon Aliens is a graphic adventure not too dissimilar to Dragonlore.

"Chopper"
Ocean

Raven Project
Mindscape
Described by Mindscape as "Wing Commander meets Comanche: Maximum Overkill", Raven Project is a CD epic.

Revenge
Mindscape

Syndicate 2
Bullfrog

NOVEMBER

Cyber
Ocean

Heart Of Darkness
Virgin

Hegira
Mindscape
It's a "futuristic rollercoaster racing game" according to Mindscape.

Warhammer
Mindscape
A Games Workshop collaboration based on the fantasy table-top game.

DECEMBER

"Chopper"
Ocean

Creation
Bullfrog

Dragonlore 2
Mindscape
Our man from Mindscape, James Morris, thought long and hard before revealing "it's the sequel to Dragonlore". Yes, we'd gathered that, but what's it going to be like? "I don't know" he continued. Oh.

Dungeon Keeper
Bullfrog

Star Fleet Academy
Interplay
The third in Interplay's Star Trek series of games, SFA puts you in the shoes of a young, idealistic, Captain Kirk wannabe. Huh — bloody students!

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Activision
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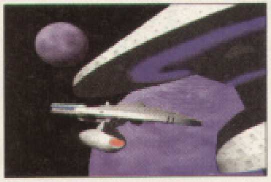

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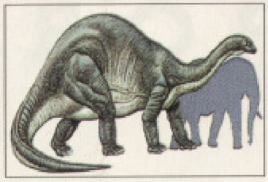

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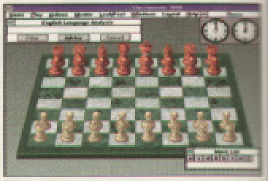

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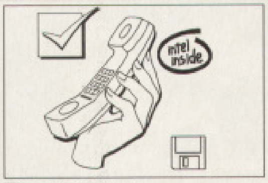

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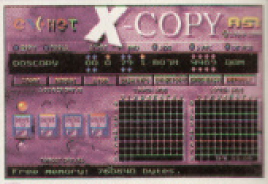

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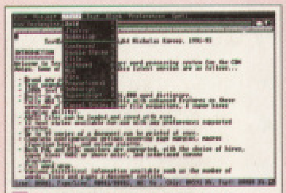

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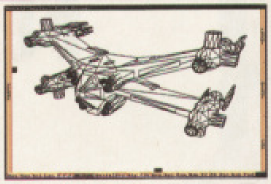

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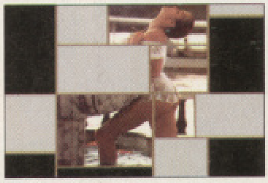

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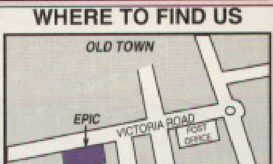

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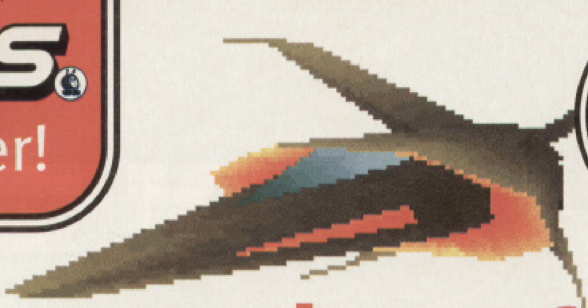

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PC GAMES STAR
92%

A couple of issues back, 'our' Dean quite literally popped his reviewing cork over Inferno, Ocean Software's space-tastic sci-fi epic. "A dazzling game!" he exclaimed. "A true, cinematic epic on a massive scale!" he gibbered. "Brilliant!" he spluttered. In fact, so taken was he with the game that he awarded it an earth-shattering 92% and a coveted PC GAMES STAR.

Blimey. Sounds good, doesn't it? Bet you're itching to rush out and buy it, aren't you? But wait — don't head off down the shops just yet.

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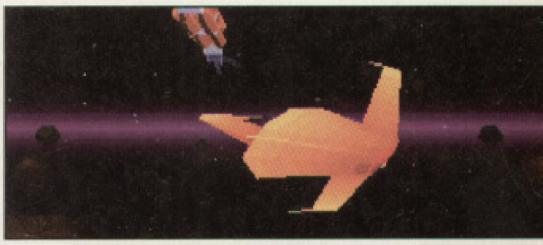

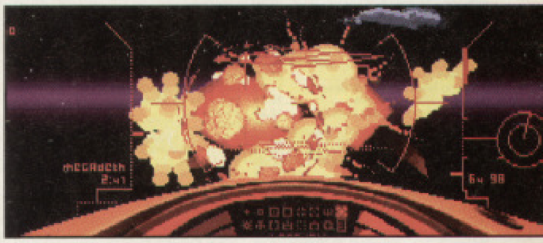

10 Reasons Why Dean Loved Inferno And Gave It 92%

1 It's set in space.
2 You fly a fab spacefighter.
3 You shoot lots of aliens.
4 You can actually fly inside the big starships.
5 It's from DID, the people wot did TFX.
6 Which means the graphics are amazing.
7 And it's on CD, so it's got to be good.
8 There are brill ray-traced animated cut-scenes.
9 Which are all accompanied by top digitised speech.
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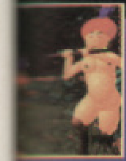
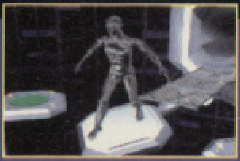
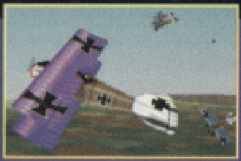
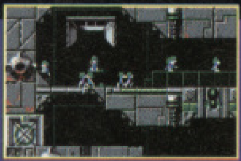
reviews

What will you find from Santa in your stocking this year? How about something hand-picked from this little bunch of software beauties, perhaps...?



FAST / FINISH

Reviewed On CD

Armoured Fist	Novalogic	72
Creature Shock	Virgin Interactive Ent.	60
Cyberwar	Sales Curve Interactive	80
Cyclemania	Accolade	70
Ecstatica	Psygnosis	52
FPS: Baseball '94	Sierra	64
Malcolm's Revenge	Virgin Interactive Ent.	60
Noctropolis	Electronic Arts	58
Novastorm	Psygnosis	84
Retribution	Gremlin Interactive	66
Under A Killing Moon	US Gold	88
US Navy Fighters	Electronic Arts	82

Reviewed On Disk

All New World Of Lemmings	Psygnosis	76
Dawn Patrol	Empire	74
Hannibal	Krisalis	86
Inordinate Desire	Black Legend	78
Universe	Core Design	36

The coveted PC GAMES STAR is awarded to any game scoring 90% or over, indicating that the game in question is an essential addition to any games-player's software collection.

HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO...

Everyone at PC GAMES is a complete gaming nut. That's why we know exactly what you want to see in a game review (or so we like to think).

So what do you get?

Well, you get all the info you need and no waffling — we get straight to the point. On top of that you get loads of big screenshots of the game in action, along with maps and diagrams helpfully illustrating any major gameplay features — after all a picture, as they say, speaks a thousand words.

Then we compare the big games with another of similar type in the 'It's A Bit Like...' panel. Typically this will be the best game in its genre so you'll probably be pretty familiar with it, thus giving you a handy point of reference.

The whole PC GAMES team plays every game reviewed and, although only one person's name appears on each review, the criticisms and Overall mark reflect all of our combined opinions, hopefully giving you a balanced view. Should any team member disagree violently with the rest, his comments will appear in a special box in the review.

Finally, we have the essential score panel...

All the guff you need to know about who publishes the game, who developed it, its price and when it's due to be released. You even get a contact 'phone number to call if you want more info.

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MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 35Mb of hard disk space and mouse

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; Sound Blaster, Pro Audio Spectrum, Wave Blaster and Sound Canvas soundcards.

The game's good and bad points, which are basically a concise summary of the criticisms made in the main review.

THE GOOD...

- Wonderfully well-animated graphics with lots of variety.
- Excellent sound effects throughout.
- Great fun for anyone who's not a major strategy-head.

...AND THE BAD

- TIf you *are* a major strategy-head it might seem a bit low-brow.
- Two player mode is a little flawed and I can't see it being played over the phone much in this country.

The Overall Score. We don't see any point in ratings for playability and all that other stuff — you get one mark to sum everything up and that's it.

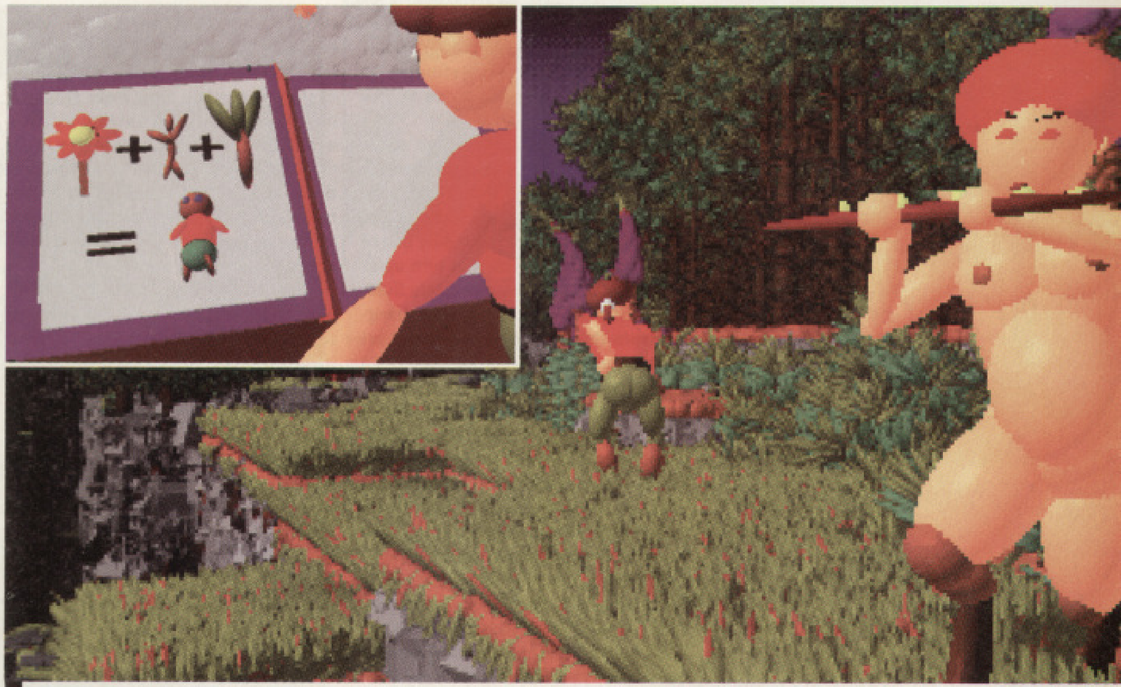
Overall

85%

PC GAMES STAR

Ecstatica CD

Werewolves, minotaurs and bears who break wind... Dean Evans tries to unravel the mysteries of the new 3D arcade adventure from Psygnosis.



Thursday, November 18th, 928 AD... The werewolf trapped me into a corner, but I found the strength to beat it back once more. Eventually it retreated to nurse its wounds. But this time it had wounded me — not badly, but enough to make me dizzy. I staggered away around the corner, hoping to find somewhere to hide, but there was a huge spider clinging to the wall. God, I hate spiders. Somehow, I must find a weapon...

Like Little Big Adventure and Magic Carpet, Psygnosis' Ecstatica is one of the new wave of CD-only games that sends games reviewers into hyperbole overdrive. "Stunning", "awesome" and "brilliant" are just some of the enthusiastic superlatives that spring to mind. And who could forget the classic "Ecstatica is so good, even your granny will love it", or the timeless "Ecstatica is yet another candidate for game of the year."

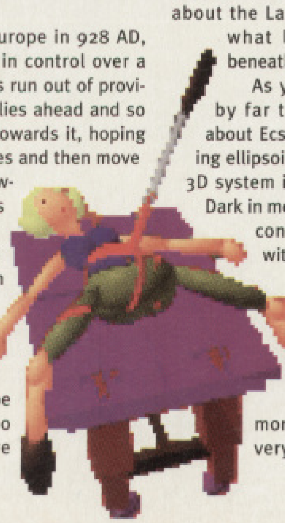
Whatever people end up saying, if you've got a CD-ROM drive, there's no doubt that Ecstatica is an essential purchase. Granted, it's not the most stunningly original title to hit the PC in the past year — you could say it's simply Alone In The Dark with curves — but it has the same spooky, mysterious feel of the original Infogrames classic, as well as the adventuring, the object manipulation and, of course, the combat. But best of all there's not a space-chomping, non-interactive Full Motion Video sequence in sight.

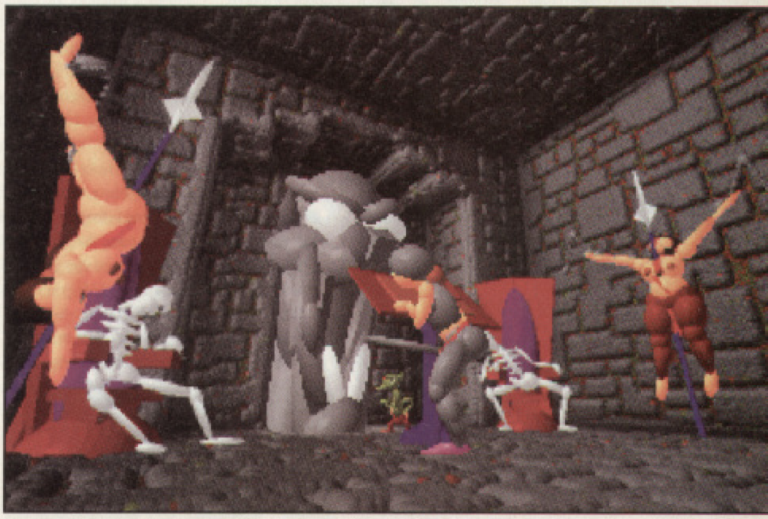
Set in Northern Europe in 928 AD, Ecstatica places you in control over a tired traveller who has run out of provisions. A small village lies ahead and so you spur your horse towards it, hoping to restock your supplies and then move on. Unfortunately, however, the village has been overrun by demonic, nightmarish creatures and, when you try to leave, the only bridge across to the outside world collapses, cutting off your escape route. You have no choice but to venture further into the damned village and to try to unravel its evil secret.

Ecstatica has a distinctly sinister feel to it, like a neat combination of Hammer horror and modern adventure game. As the game begins, you discover that almost the entire village has been murdered and that a variety of monsters are lurking in the streets, including a werewolf, a minotaur, a couple of dragons, a small skeleton troop, and lots of small gremlin-type things that look like Piglet from the Winnie The Pooh stories. The monsters are far from stupid and, once they've spotted you, they'll follow you ruthlessly. The werewolf, for example, is smart enough to hide round corners, waiting patiently to pounce on you as you walk nonchalantly through the village.

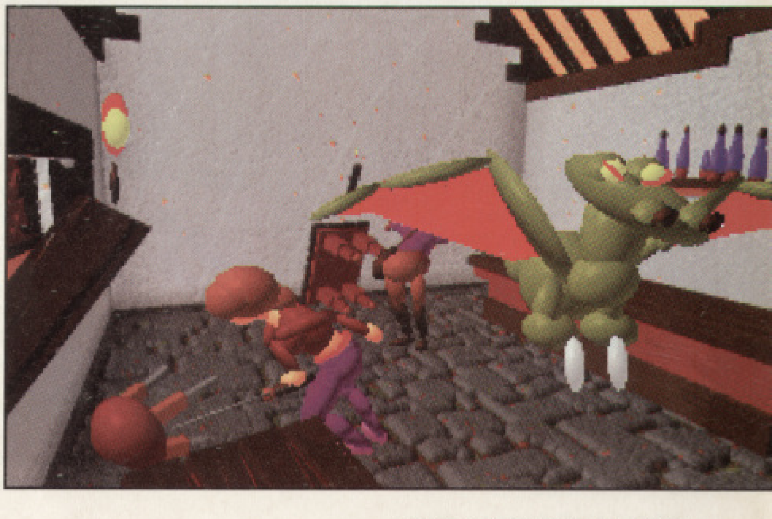
So, as Edward Carnby battled evil, Lovecraftian imaginings in Alone In The Dark, it's up to you to unearth the evil secrets of the village of Tirich. What happened to the village witch? Is it true about the Lady Of The Lake? Who or what lurks in the dungeons beneath the church..?

As you've probably noticed, by far the most striking thing about Ecstatica is the smooth-moving ellipsoid graphics 3D engine. The 3D system is similar to Alone In The Dark in most respects but instead of constructing each character with a collection of flat polygons, Ecstatica's 3D engine uses a combination of over 80 ellipses to give the characters in the game a rounded, more realistic look. It works very well, and while it does

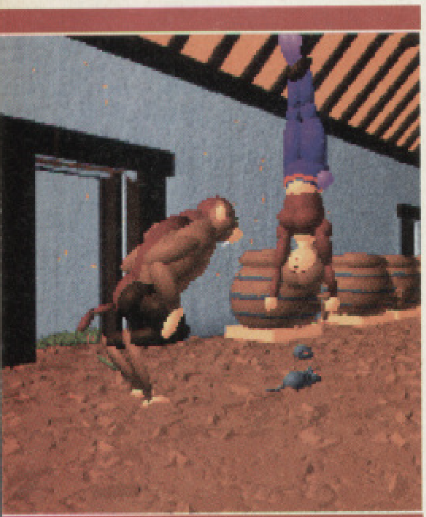




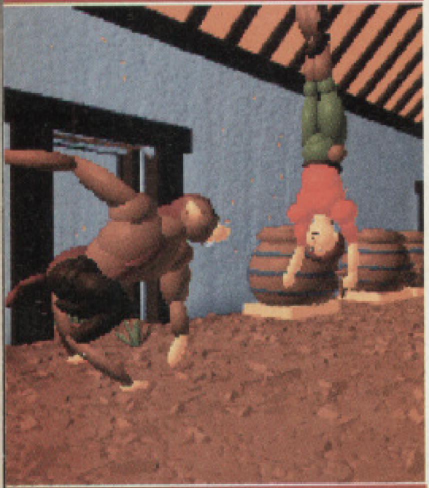
(Above top) If you collect three magical ingredients, stick them in the pot and simmer them for 20 minutes, you can turn yourself into a weasel. And you can change into a frog. No, really. (Above) Things get a bit grisly as the heroine discovers what has happened to some of the more "well-endowed" women from the village. Hmmm, kebab anyone?



Sexual Equality



In Ecstatica, you're not forced to play a macho, muscled bloke. You can also play a macho, muscled woman...



...But rest assured, if it's rock hard blokeness that you want, then it's yours. There's no difference between the two characters, though.

tend to exaggerate certain features (like the female bum, for example), the characters are much better defined and more lifelike than their Alone In The Dark counterparts.

Sadly, however, what you can't appreciate from the screenshots here, is the sheer beauty of the animation. Although the characters in Ecstatica look like they've been created by one of those balloon-modellers that turn up at children's parties, they move very fluidly, whether they're running away, hanging from the ceiling, fighting or just standing around waiting for something to happen.

The feeling of 'living' movement is enhanced by the fact that the characters in Ecstatica also have a wide variety of hidden, non-interactive animations. These are very small and, as they last no longer than one or two seconds, you never feel as though you've lost control of your character. In reality, they don't really amount to much more than a nervous look or a quick scratch of the nose, but the inclusion of these mannerisms does make the characters seem much more realistic.

But despite the innovative graphic style and the superb animation, there's no hiding the fact that Ecstatica has all the features of Alone In The Dark, with perhaps a touch of Little Big Adventure thrown in for good measure. Like AITD, in Ecstatica you take control of a 3D character, who you must move around a number of locations, solving puzzles and collecting objects. Again like AITD, the background scenery is all pre-rendered and, instead of using a fixed isometric-3D perspective, the locations are viewed using a variety of different camera angles.

Now, while this is all very commendable (and very, very arty), by choosing to use changing camera angles Ecstatica unfortunately suffers from precisely the same problems as Alone In The Dark did. Occasionally, when the camera view flips, it's difficult to reorientate yourself quickly, and when a camera angle makes it hard to see a door, it's often very tricky to move through it first time around. In the same way, the combat is also slightly tricky, especially when you're being punched back and forth and the view keeps shifting.

But once you've become used to the 3D engine, it's very easy to move your hero or heroine around the gameworld. Your character is moved using the PC's numeric keypad, and while the control system is slightly more complicated than the one in AITD, it's a much more versatile and realistic one.

To explain it simply, the arrow keys on the keypad (i.e. '2', '4', '6' and '8') move your character forwards and backwards and turn him/her left and right; the '7' key punches with the left hand (or uses whatever weapon you're holding) and the '9' key punches or swipes with the right hand; pressing the '5' key allows you to duck to avoid punches from the werewolf and the Minotaur; while the '1' and the '3' keys allow you to pick up objects with the left and right hand respectively.

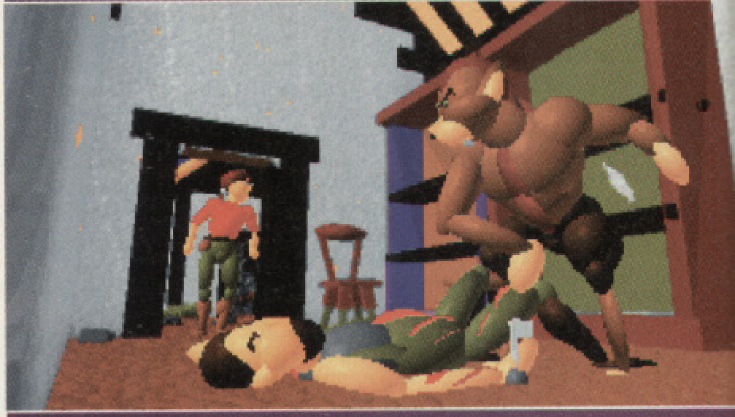
One of the more interesting things about Ecstatica is the fact that your character doesn't possess a handy pair of infinity trousers or a bottomless backpack. You see, unlike a traditional adventure game where you can usually carry twenty or more objects at once, in Ecstatica you can only carry two items — one in each hand. So, if you've got a weapon in one hand, you have to carefully plan your movements. You don't want to end up stranded without a vital object, or facing an angry minotaur holding nothing but a pretty flower and a teddy bear.

But when you do eventually find a weapon (i.e. a knife, a mace or a

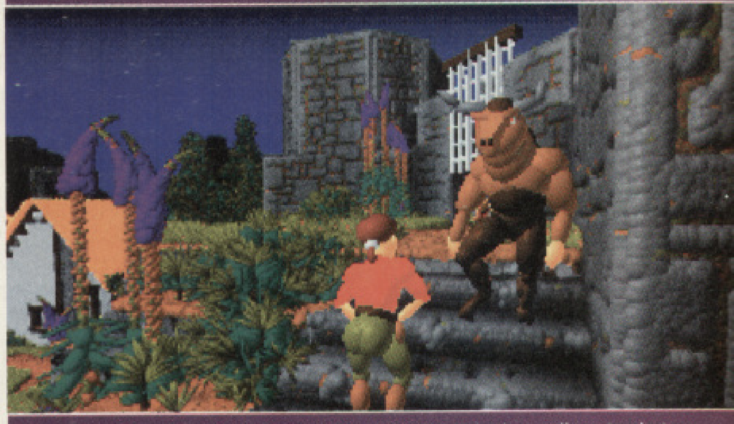
It's a bit like...

...Alone in the Dark 1, 2 or 3. Take your pick. With its static backdrops, simple-to-use control system and polygonal characters, AITD pioneered the 3D graphic adventure. Okay, Infogrames lost its way a bit with Alone 2, but the imminent Alone 3 promises a return to the tension and horror of the original.

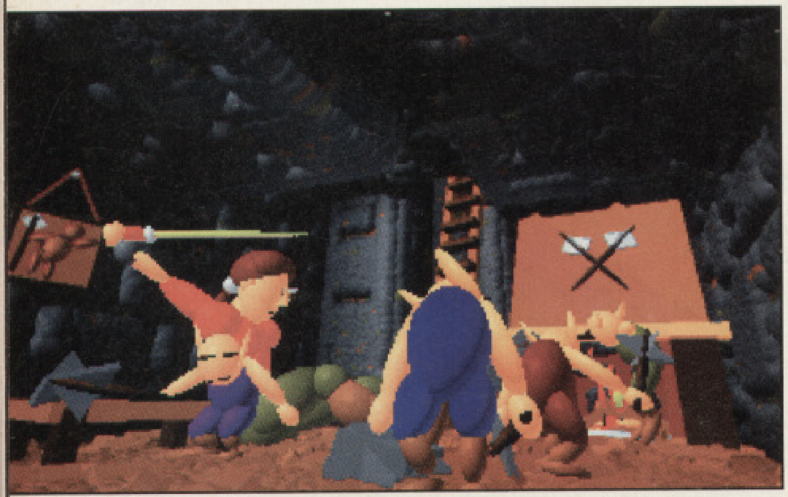
Thorn In *My Side*



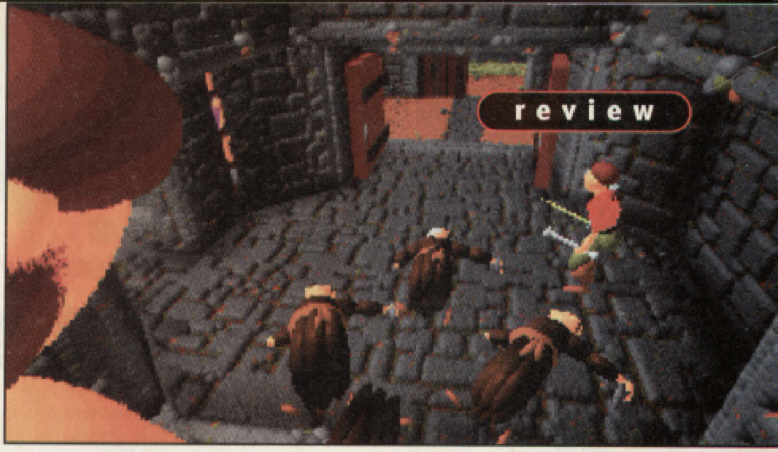
The werewolf is a constant source of irritation. You can stun him, but you can't kill him.



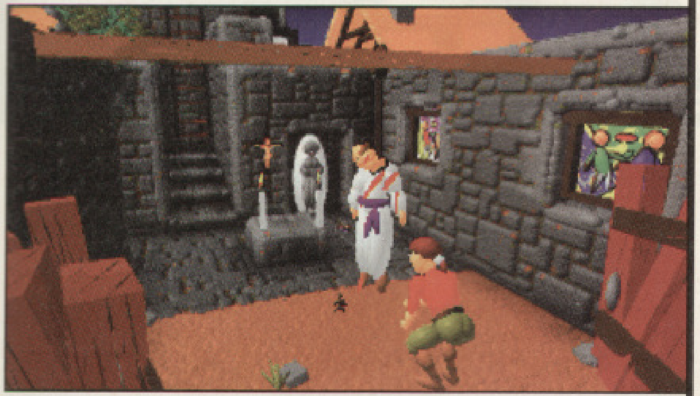
Venture out of the village and the werewolve's role is taken on by the equally nasty minotaur.



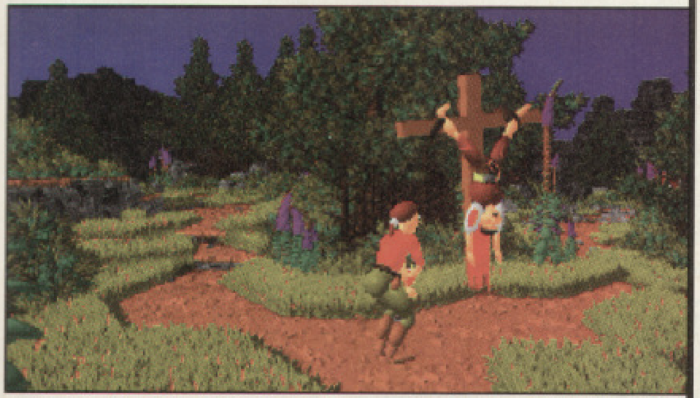
These axe-wielding gremlins are the weakest monsters you encounter in Ecstatica.



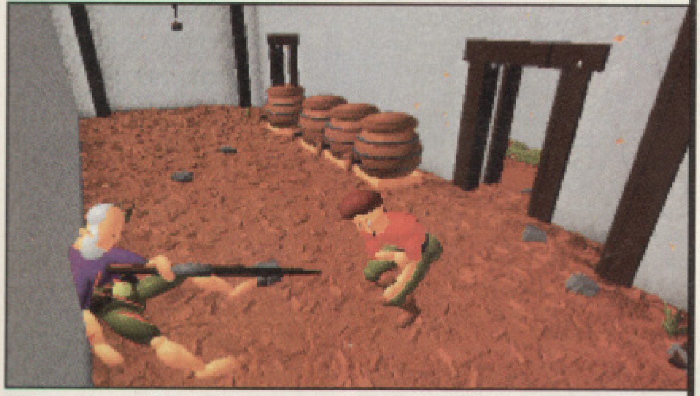
Ugh! That's ***Horrible***!



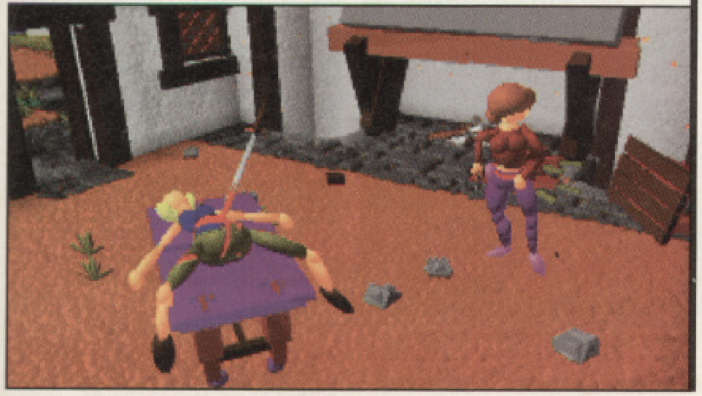
The priest has been hung for daring to ask the werewolf for a donation to repair the roof.



Outside the village, the minotaur shows that he has a talent for woodwork and crucifixion.



You've got to hand it to the demons — every villager has been killed in a very original way.



They held this woman down and then skewered her with a sword. Worse still, she's still alive.

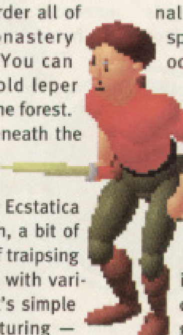
sword), combat is a simple matter of moving towards your intended target and pressing the relevant keys to swipe and stab. And as Ecstatica isn't a linear game, you can kill whoever you want. Sadly, the minotaur and the werewolf are fairly indestructible and remain a constant nuisance throughout the game, but if you want to push the priest off the bell-tower or murder all of the monks in the monastery (above) then you can. You can even murder the poor old leper who begs for coppers in the forest.

As I've mentioned, beneath the ellipsoid graphics beats the heart of a traditional quest game, and solving Ecstatica requires keen observation, a bit of puzzle solving and a lot of traipsing backwards and forwards with various objects. Frequently it's simple and often blatant adventuring — for example, a little girl screams for her teddy bear which is lying on a table in the witch's house. The monks won't let you into the monastery unless you believe in God... Hmmmm, wasn't there a bible lying on the floor of the church?

Ecstatica is also notable because it's one of the first games to receive the new ELSPA "18" rating certificate. While the visuals are quite graphic in their depiction of death (a priest hangs by his neck in the church, a woman lies skewered on a table, an old man has been crucified in the forest — ugh!), the "18" rating has not just been slapped upon the game because of the graphics — I mean, come on, just how grisly can a ellipsoid priest be? No, the rating was also awarded because of the plot content, which revolves around demonic possession, murder and black magic.

There's no denying that Ecstatica is a great game. The ellipsoid-based 3D engine is quite remarkable, and the digitised speech that appears throughout is crisp, clear and very well acted. While many of us thought that the Alone In The Dark series had lost its way with the blast-fest that was Alone 2, with Ecstatica Psygnosis has taken the eerie, menacing feel of the original Alone In The Dark game and come up with one of the most atmospheric games you'll play this year.

If I have a criticism — and it's only a tiny one — it's that the playing area is a bit too small. Ecstatica is beautifully drawn and the characters are wonderfully animated, but after you've wandered about a bit, you soon discover that there are very few new and exciting locations to be discovered. The puzzles aren't particularly difficult either and although I haven't managed to finish the game yet, Dave breezed through it in just under three days.



But that said, Ecstatica is still a marvellous game and if you liked the original Alone In The Dark, then this 3D spectacular will keep you more than occupied. Although I didn't have as much fun with it as I had with Little Big Adventure, if you've got a CD-ROM drive and you're fed up with the endless, unimaginative conversions of old floppy games, then take a look at Ecstatica. Although it's very similar to Alone In The Dark, it's one of the most exciting and one of the most innovative games of the year.

ECSTATICA

PSYGNOSIS/IN-HOUSE

(051) 709 5755

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 10Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

*THE **GOOD...***

- The ellipsoid graphics are very effective.
- The game has a dark, sinister feel that reminds you of the original Alone In The Dark game.
- The speech and the soundtrack are also excellent.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- The playing area is perhaps a bit on the small side.
- The puzzles aren't the most difficult you'll ever come across, and you might complete it too quickly.

Overall

92%

review

Universe

David Upchurch steps back in time with Core's dismal graphic adventure.

As the likes of LucasArts, Sierra and Westwood continue to churn out smash hit after smash hit with what seems like effortless ease, other companies can be forgiven for trying to have a go at writing a graphic adventure themselves.

After all, they must think, how hard can it possibly be? All you have to do is knock up a point-'n'-click icon interface (ten-a-penny these days), paint a few pretty pictures , draw a few sprites and think up a few logic puzzles, and before you know it you've got a sure-fire runaway Top Ten chart smash on your hands. But as Universe, Core Design's second foray into the world of graphic adventures (its first was Curse Of Enchantia), so ably proves, it's not half as easy as it looks.

Universe has the look and feel of a graphic adventure from about four or five years ago. The icon-based player interface, for example, allows you to perform over a dozen possible actions. As well as old favourites such as 'Pick Up' and 'Use', there are commands to let you 'Combine' objects, 'Insert' objects, 'Throw' objects, 'Wear' objects and even 'Jump'.

The kindest words to describe this system are 'cumbersome' and 'clunky' (and, for the record, the unkindest are 'stupid' and 'crap'). While I appreciate that the programmers were trying to get away from the 'one action fits all' approach of most modern adventures, it seems pointless to have quite so many actions when some of them are only used once or twice during the whole game.

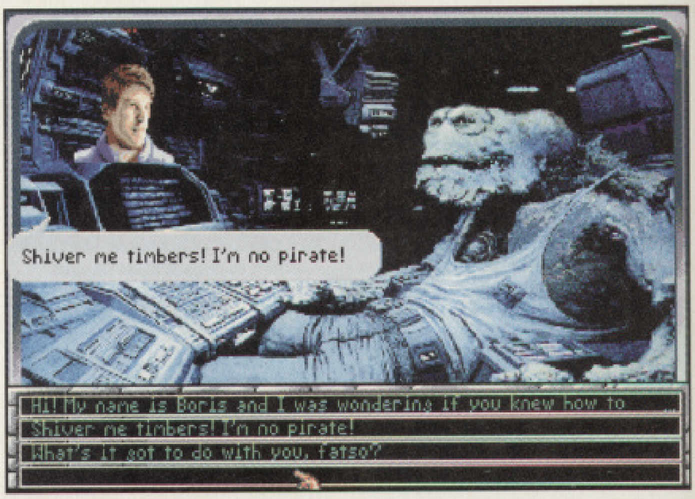
The plot is equally archaic, and centres around the, er, 'adventures' (for want of a better term) of young Boris Verne who, after being transported to an alien dimension by his eccentric uncle's Virtual Dimension Inducer, has to battle assorted alien and solve numerous puzzles in order to find his way home.

This yawningly unoriginal scenario would be just about bearable if Boris's environment was filled with exotic locations to explore and interesting characters to meet, but it's not — the graphics are typically unexciting and grainy-looking, the sprites are small and poorly animated and the music is dreary. Like its namesake, Universe is severely lacking in atmosphere.

In keeping with Universe's all-pervading air of dullness, there's barely any humour in the game. What little there is mainly comes from Boris' laconic, cynical descriptions of his environment. Trouble is, when Boris groans, say, "Yes, it's yet another monitor" or something similar on examining his hundredth TV screen, it makes you suspect that the programmers got as bored writing the game as you will playing it.

And you will get bored, believe me. The puzzles veer wildly between plain uninteresting and sheer illogical, and too much of the game, especially early on, is spent trudging around dozens of desperately dull locations which are near-identical save for the odd rock or pebble. And matters aren't helped by the way that Boris often gets 'stuck' on the scenery, sometimes permanently, forcing you to restart from your last saved position.

In a futile attempt to liven things up, the programmers have sprinkled a handful of arcade-like sequences throughout the game. Purists need not worry over them too much, though, as they're very, very, very simple, both in concept and to succeed at. Sadly, the fact that I enjoyed playing these arcade bits far more than the graphic adventuring bits says it all really.



Shiver me timbers! I'm no pirate!

Hi! My name is Boris and I was wondering if you knew how to
Shiver me timbers! I'm no pirate!
What's it got to do with you, fatso?

(Above) The conversation system is of the tried-and-tested 'multiple choice' type, though it's not very clever the way some of your speech options mysteriously 'bleed off' the end of the line.

UNIVERSE

CORE DESIGN/IN-HOUSE

(0332) 297797

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

16MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM, 6Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...

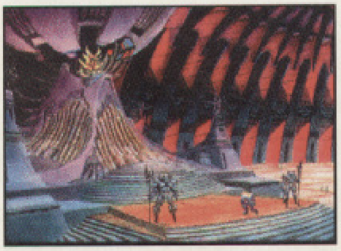
- Oh god, there must be one...

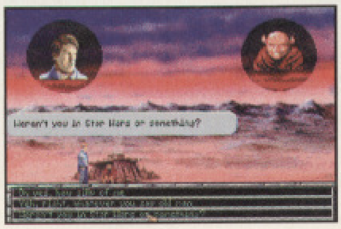
...AND THE BAD

- The player interface is ridiculously over-complicated and clunky.
- Boris has a nasty, game-ending habit of getting permanently stuck in the scenery.
- The arcade sections are so trivial and easy that they're pointless.
- Drab graphics are complemented by dreary music.

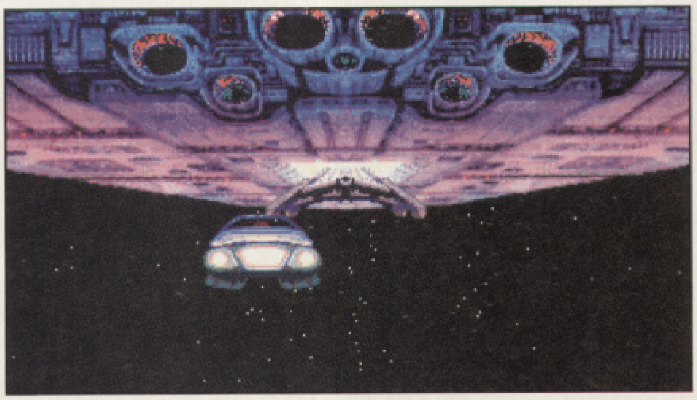
Overall

35%





Weren't you in Star Wars or something?



(Above) In the first arcade sequence you encounter, you have to dock your hovercar with an alien's spaceship. It's not exactly Virtua Racing, is it?

(Left) A fine example of one of Universe's lamentable attempts at humour. You see that little hermit bloke? He looks (snigger) a bit (hurr-hurr) like Yoda! (Sound of sides splitting.)

PIZZA $ TYCOON

Do you want to know what's cooking?

Do you knead to make some dough?

Then get a piece-of-the-action with Pizza Tycoon.

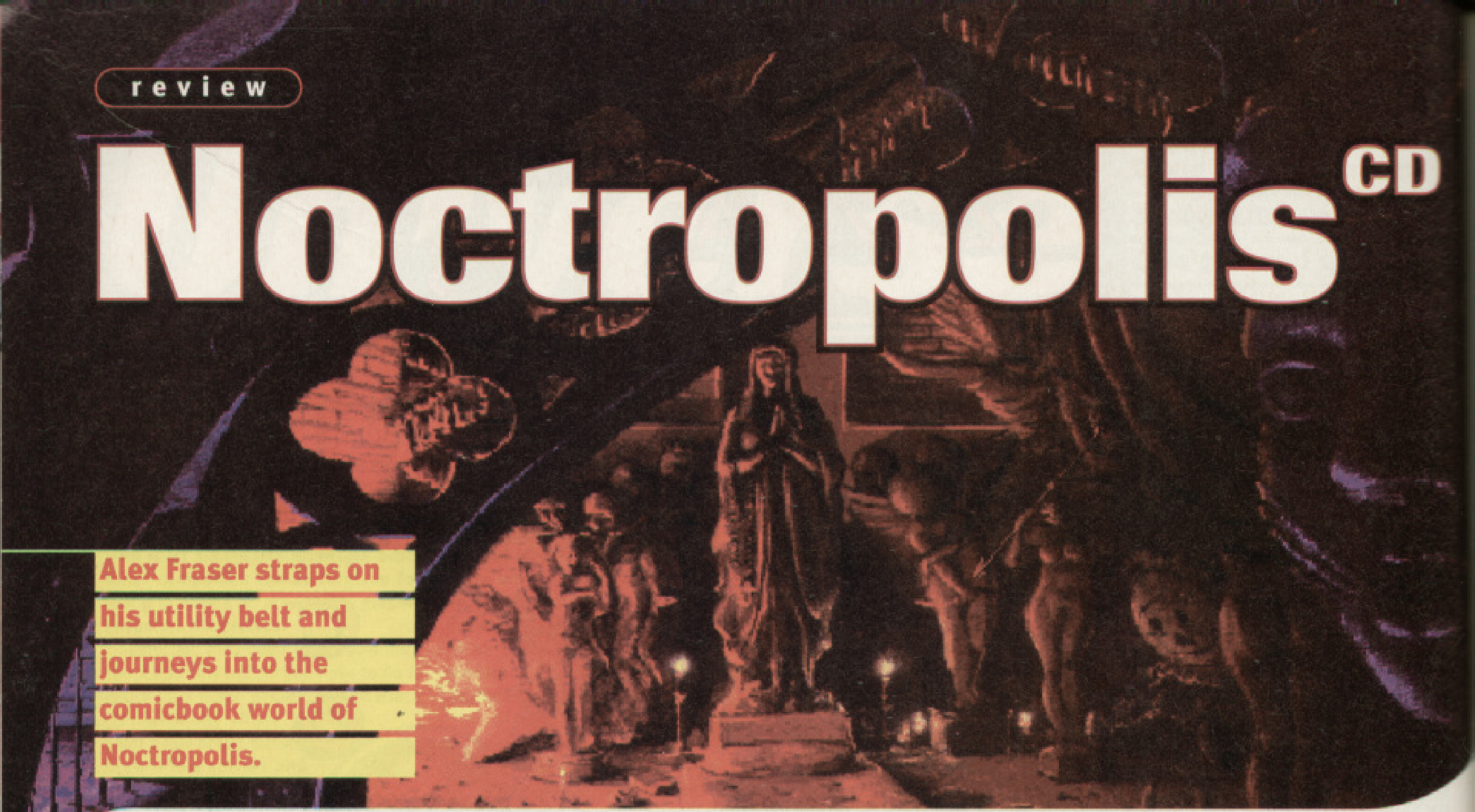
A business simulation to get your teeth into.

Order up **Pizza Tycoon** from us.

Because at MicroProse, we deliver.

AVAILABLE FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES MICROPROSE

Noctropolis CD



Alex Fraser straps on his utility belt and journeys into the comicbook world of Noctropolis.

Heroes in adventure games tend to fall into one of two categories: either they're comical no-hopers like Leisuresuit Larry or Guybrush Threepwood who somehow manage to triumph against impossible odds, or else they're broad-shouldered, square-jawed walking monuments to testosterone who bear names like Stark or Kirt or Steel.

Peter Grey, the everyday hero of Noctropolis, is sadly neither. He doesn't really have enough personality to fall into the funny category, nor is he macho enough to fit into the other. In fact, he's what Imp might describe as a no-life saddie. His life is a mess: his wife has walked out on him, his bookshop hasn't had any custom for as long as he can remember, and his post consists entirely of bills, final demands, threats and court summons.

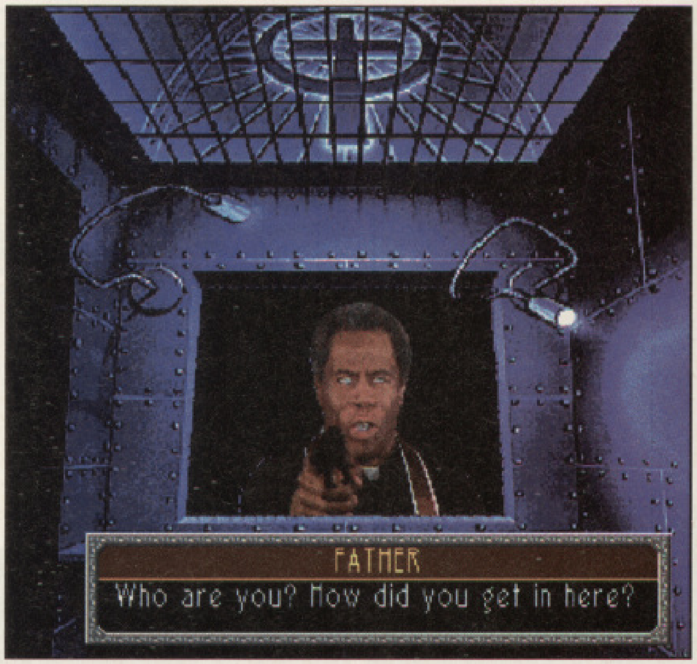
But instead of doing something about it, Grey is quite happy to sit there with his giant comic collection and spend hours fantasising about donning a big, black cape and leaping across the rooftops in pursuit of assorted villains, not to mention passionate embraces with cat-suited heroines.

One particularly gloomy day Grey receives a letter from the publisher of his favourite comic, Darksheer & Stiletto, saying that if he doesn't pay his subscription he'll be taken to court and that, by the way, the comic is being discontinued. But as Grey reads the final instalment (where Darksheer puts away the last of his enemies and promptly retires), he has a disturbing vision of being attacked by the Succubus, one of the comic's nastier villainesses.

Just as she's about to sink her fangs into his throat, he hears a ring at the door: a package has arrived for him containing two strange coins and a special edition of the comic, which continues where the original series left off. The new story starts with Darksheer's old enemies being liberated from prison by a mysterious character called Flux, but with Darksheer retired and his luscious sidekick Stiletto now a drink-sodden alcoholic, there's no-one to save the city of Noctropolis from the villains' wicked plans.

And then something very strange happens. Grey flips one of the coins which arrived with the comic and suddenly finds himself in darkest Noctropolis. Aside from being a bit taken aback (as, undoubtedly, you would be), he realises that he hasn't the foggiest what to do next: he doesn't know anyone and he doesn't know where anything is. After chatting to a newspaper seller he decides to pay a call to Father Desmond, the kindly preacher who regularly appears in the comics as Darksheer's friend.

Good ol' Father Desmond seems a bit jumpy, doesn't he? But then again, he's been locked in his cathedral by a bloodsucking, sex-crazed demon so I guess he wan't expecting any visitors.



FATHER

Who are you? How did you get in here?

As you play the game, exploring the many different locations, solving the odd puzzle and trying to get information out of the uncooperative locals, you soon find out that you (as Peter Grey) aren't going to get very far trying to find Darksheer, so you actually have to become him instead. This means enlisting Stiletto's help (though prising her away from her bottle proves less than easy), locating the Shadowlair (Darksheer's HQ) and trying not to get killed by the dastardly villains.

Noctropolis is a fairly standard as point-'n'-click adventures go: you talk to people, you collect objects and then you use them to solve puzzles. The control system is a bit weird, though. You can't just walk around a location as you

It's a bit like...

...Gabriel Knight. Both Peter Grey and Gabriel own run-down bookshops and get more bills than customers, and both end up battling the supernatural. In Gabriel's case it's Voodoo rather than comic villains, though both are equally lethal. Gabriel Knight is marginally better and takes longer to complete, though the two games both have lots of atmosphere.

would in most other graphic adventures: you have to select the 'Goto' option from the menu (a strange pyramid-shaped affair which you bring up by clicking the right mouse button) and then you click on the part of the screen you want to visit, though nine times out of ten you'll be told you can't go there after all. I put this down to the fact that the sprites are digitised, and there are a limited number of animations in the game. It's still a bit odd, though.

Even stranger is the way that you use objects. Certain things can be picked up and stored in your inventory (nothing that unusual there), and if you select the 'Use' option, the inventory appears and you can choose the object you want to try out. However, if you want to use an object on-screen, such as operating a lift, throwing a switch or whatever, you have to 'Move' it instead. I mean, since when did anyone 'move' a switch? Honestly.

The control system is fairly easy to get used to, but ultimately it affects the difficulty of the puzzles. When you use something from your inventory, you don't have to specify what you want to use it with. If, say, you want to try using a wire, you select 'Use', then click on the wire and Grey does the appropriate thing with it. This makes some of the puzzles a bit too simple, because if you get stuck you just go through your inventory using every item until you get a result.

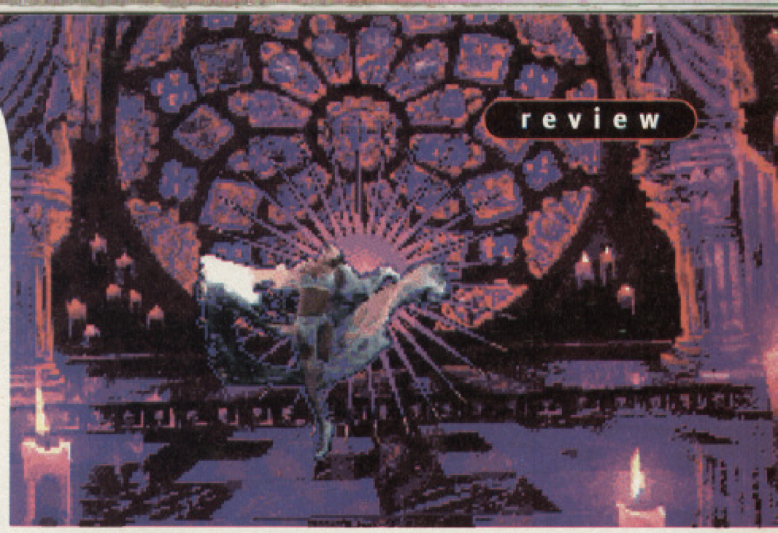
Fortunately, there is more to solving the game than using things. Much of the progress you make depends on talking to people or examining locations carefully for clues. I ground to a complete halt at one point because I'd neglected to pick up a vital object from a hidden compartment in one room, so it always pays to be observant.

Conversation takes the usual 'multiple-choice' format, where you select what you want to say from a list of foru or five different responses. If a character won't co-operate no matter what you say, it's either because they've got nothing to offer you or else they'd be happier talking to Stiletto — so have a word with her if your attempts are proving unsuccessful.

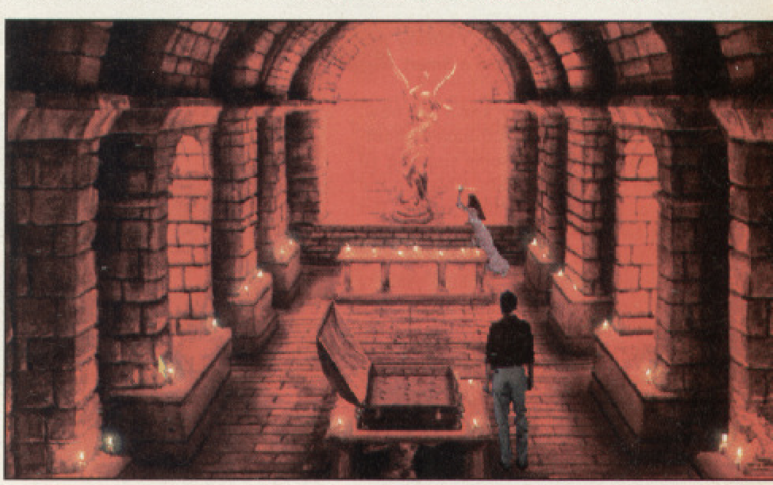
Where Noctropolis excels is in its atmosphere, which is dark, moody and very sinister. It's very much an adult game, because although there isn't much in the way of 'in-ya-face' violence, the storyline has its disturbing moments: the rape of Peter Grey by the Succubus, a couple of finger-severing scenes and one scene where Stiletto gets her groodies out before turning into one of the other villains, the hideous Dreamer. Not one for the little kiddies, then.

Basically, this is a game which you could easily complete after two or three days of solid play, but it's good while it lasts. The storyline has a good hook to it, the graphics and sound compliment the atmosphere, and you'll find it very hard to put down once you've started. The strong points pretty much outweigh the weak, so while it isn't perfect, it's still a hell of a lot better than most graphic adventures.

As for the outcome, there are a few loose ends which leads me to suspect that there will be a Noctropolis 2. If I'm right, then I'll look forward to it. Meanwhile, you should have plenty of fun playing this.



(Above) After chewing a great hole in your neck and then raping you, the Succubus takes a well-deserved pasting. A bit of the old holy water should get her off your back — literally!



NOCTROPOLIS^CD

ELECTRONIC ARTS/FLASHPOINT

(0753) 549442

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...

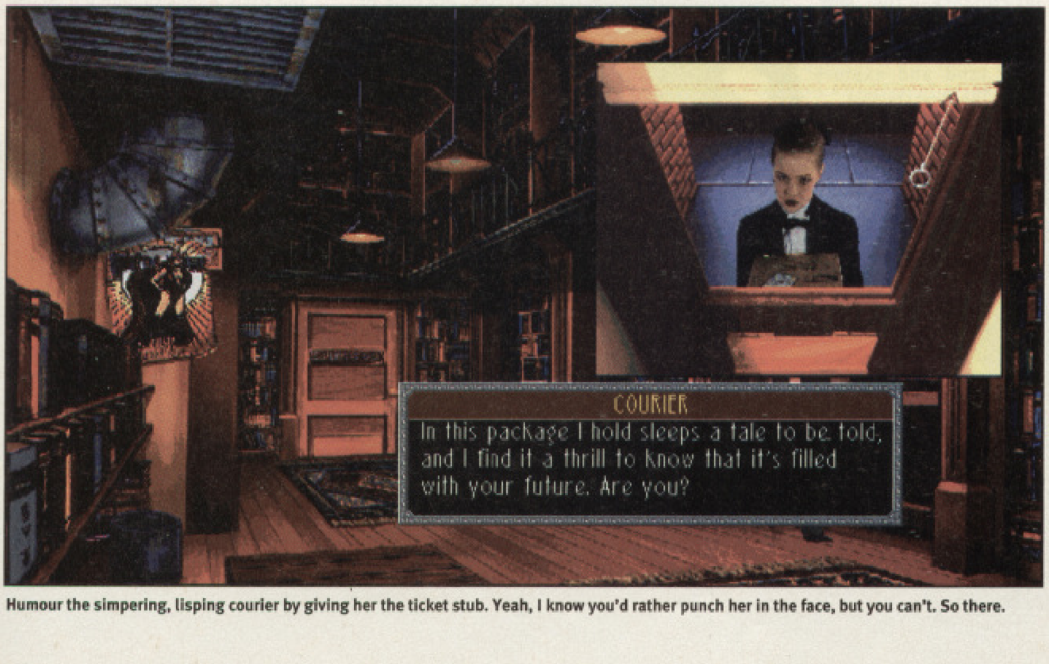
- Atmospheric, intriguing and strong on plot.
- Good graphics and sound.

...AND THE BAD

- Puzzles are easily solved through trial and error.
- Control system is a bit unusual.
- The 'adult' storyline means it's not a game you should buy to keep the kids amused.

Overall

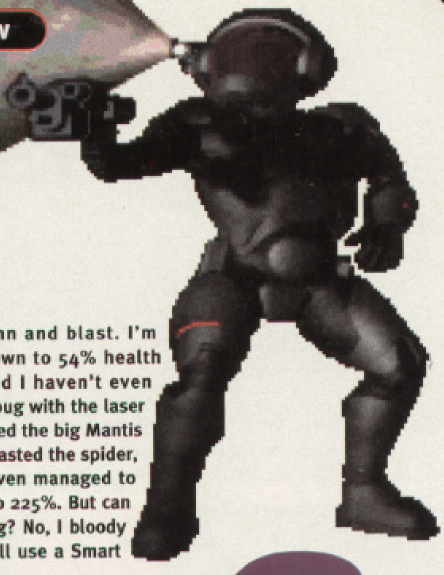
83%

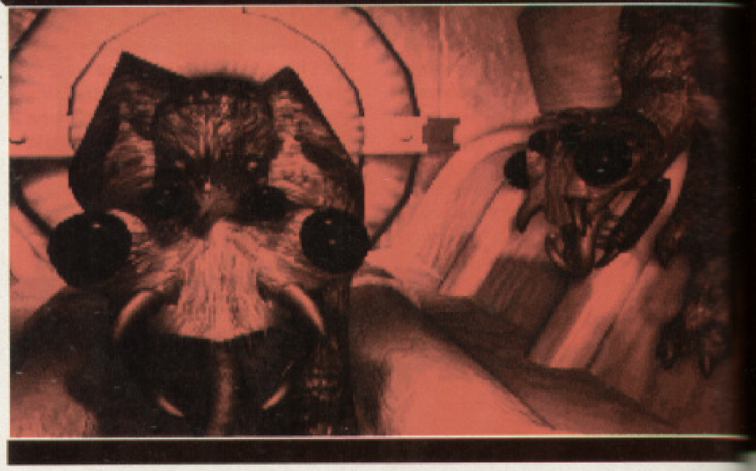


COURIER

In this package I hold sleeps a tale to be told, and I find it a thrill to know that it's filled with your future. Are you?

Humour the simpering, lisping courier by giving her the ticket stub. Yeah, I know you'd rather punch her in the face, but you can't. So there.





Creature Shock CD

In space, nobody can hear you scream. And Dean Evans screams very loudly after playing Virgin's new space adventure.

Damn and blast. I'm down to 54% health and I haven't even wounded the blue bug with the laser up its bum. I've killed the big Mantis monster and I've blasted the spider, no problem. I've even managed to power my gun up to 225%. But can I kill this slug-thing? No, I bloody can't. Oh, sod it. I'll use a Smart Bomb instead...

As you probably know by now, Creature Shock is a CD-based shoot-'em-up that features some stunning 3D Studio rendered graphics, a big gun and lots of slime-dripping alien nasties. But take away the atmospheric soundtrack, the digitised speech and the mouth-watering, "Oops, I've dribbled over my shirt again" visuals and you're left with a game that's essentially Operation Wolf with aliens.

Creature Shock is set in the far-flung future. With the Earth beset by the problems of famine, disease and massive over-population, mankind prepares to colonise the other planets in his solar system. To this end, three huge 2001-style survey ships have been constructed and, as the atmospheric intro sequence begins, the third of these ships, the SS Amazon, is slowly cruising towards Saturn.

Unfortunately, it never gets there, because the whole ship is spectacularly disabled by a huge space monster disguised as an asteroid, which happens to be the vanguard of a massive alien invasion force. Of course, it's then up to you, armed with nothing but a weedy laser pistol, to visit the extra-terrestrial asteroid, to steal an alien specimen for scientific study, to cut the data link between a relay station on one of Saturn's moons and the alien starship, and then, finally, 400Mb of code later, to enter the heart of the alien starship to seek out and destroy the bug-eyed invaders. Phew!

Squashed onto two CDs, Creature Shock has two distinctly different styles of gameplay. Before you get to the asteroid itself, you must first negotiate a crude 3D flying section, which involves moving your yellow scoutship around the screen, shooting at Manta Ray starfighters, dodging asteroids and blasting Starfish Mine Launchers. When you've completed this annoying 3D blast and you've destroyed the end-of-level interstellar crustacean that guards the approach to the asteroid, you can then land and explore inside the alien starship.

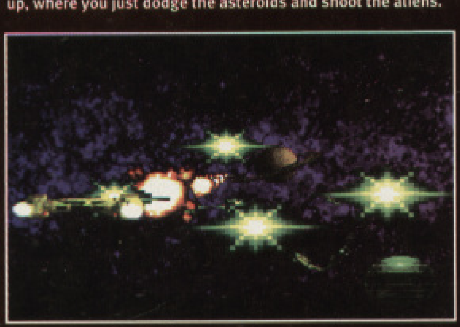
After you've left the safety of your scoutship, Creature Shock serves up another two types of shoot-'em-up action. The first of these is little more than a duck-shoot, an Operation Wolf-style arcade section where you simply move your mouse cursor around the screen, firing at the aliens and the bugs that advance towards you. It's extremely simple stuff — a quick and mindless blast that requires little or no skill to complete.

But the second type of shoot-'em-up is slightly more challenging, and it's the one that forms the bulk of the game. This is the 3D corridor encounter, where you wander down a labyrinth of intestine-like tunnels, shooting at much bigger aliens which can only be destroyed by continually hitting their weak points. Of course, you have to discover exactly where these 'points' are for yourself, but the eyes or any bump that's a bright shade of green are usually a good bet.

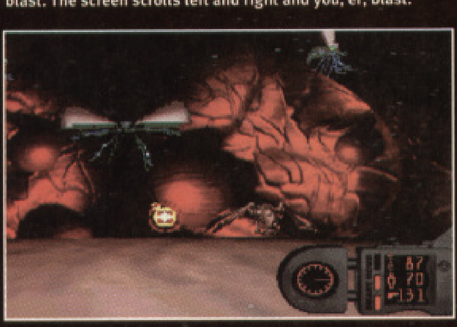
The game scrolls smoothly from one location to the next, and despite the linear nature of the pre-rendered 3D graphics, there *is* a certain amount of freedom in the game — you're able to turn left and right, and you can even turn around and retrace your steps if you think you've gone the wrong way.

When an alien appears on the screen, the movement cursor automati-

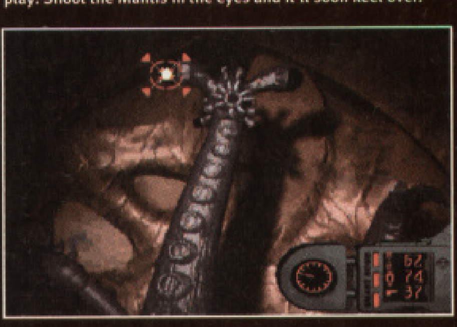
Shocking *Behaviour*



The first bit of Creature Shock is a crude 3D space shoot-'em-up, where you just dodge the asteroids and shoot the aliens.

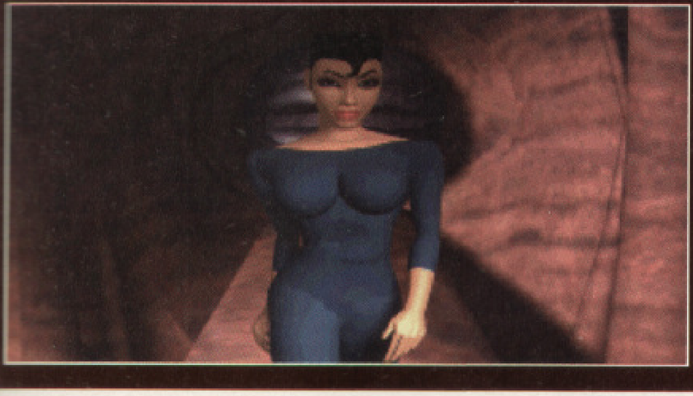


The second phase of the game is the Operation Wolf-style blast. The screen scrolls left and right and you, er, blast.

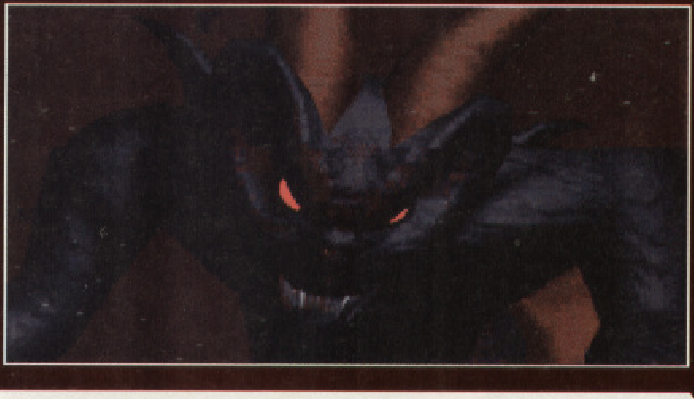


Lastly, you've got the old end-of-level boss style of gameplay. Shoot the Mantis in the eyes and it'll soon keel over.

This lovely young lady was the captain of the doomed survey ship the SS Amazon. I've fought my way past spiders, slugs and Mantis-things to get here, and now it's time for the rescue...



Unfortunately, she's not the girl I thought she was and underneath the make-up she's got big horns and a serious dental problem. Okay, I admit it, she's a dog...



It's a bit like...

...Novastorm. With its annoying 3D space bits and the boss-orientated gameplay, Creature Shock is really little more than a run-of-the-mill shoot-'em-up. So, if you're looking for a bit more blasting excitement, then Novastorm on CD-ROM, with its Rebel Assault-style gameplay, power-ups and funky soundtrack, is probably as good as it gets. Check out the review on page 84.

cally becomes a weapons cross-hair. The left mouse button is then used to fire the laser pistol while the right kicks in your portable shield, which allows you to defend yourself from oncoming fireballs, swiping claws or vicious alien headbutts. In fact, the shield is absolutely vital if you're going to succeed in Creature Shock, because your health can disappear very rapidly. You can power-up your gun at various points in the game, but your health can not be restored until you complete each individual section.

And, as far as the gameplay goes, that's really all there is to it. Okay, I half-suspected that Creature Shock was going to have about as much long-term playability as a yo-yo, but it's still massively disappointing to find out that this much-vaunted interactive space adventure, is little more than a slow-moving shoot-'em-up with fancy graphics.

Yes, I'm afraid that, like Cyberwar, Creature Shock is yet another case of "Wow, great graphics, but where's the game?" There's no doubting that it looks very pretty — the cutscenes that link the pedestrian 3D sections, and indeed the in-game graphics that follow them, are nothing short of superb. In fact, Argonaut has gone 3D Studio a-go-go with Creature Shock — if you're looking for a game to impress your friends, this is most definitely it.

But if your friends watch the game for more than 10 minutes then, like you, they'll soon realise that while Creature Shock's graphics are mouth-wateringly lovely, there's bugger all gameplay hiding underneath them. Creature Shock is about as challenging as one of those hoop-la funfair games where you have to throw the wooden ring over the bottle of Jack Daniels. It's quite an atmospheric game certainly, especially when you crank up the volume and turn the lights off, but there are long periods where nothing happens at all, and you don't get to shoot or dodge anything bigger than an otter.

The trouble with Creature Shock is that it gets very dull. There are lots of horrible creatures, but very few actual shocks. Nothing ever surprises you. You always know when you're about to enter combat, because the movement pointer suddenly becomes a crosshair and the music changes, becoming a bit more urgent and upbeat.

I'm sorry, but waving a mouse pointer around the screen, firing at the delicate bits of huge aliens, isn't my idea of good or involving gameplay. Like Novastorm, the combat in Creature Shock involves hitting the right part of the monster the right number of times. It's your typical end-of-level boss scenario and once you've got the hang of firing at the right bits and activating the shield when you're attacked, Creature Shock gets very tedious indeed.

Like Operation Wolf, or the similar T2 coin-op, Creature Shock would make a great arcade game. If you ripped out the innards of a PC, stuck them in a cabinet, mounted a plastic gun on it and added some really loud sound, then you'd have a machine that would take any sea-front amusement arcade by storm. But it's not like that (the PC doesn't boast an Uzi add-on, as far as I know), and like Operation Wolf and T2, both of which made it on to the PC, after the initial 'Gosh' factor has worn off, Creature Shock's great graphics don't carry the game very far.

All in all, Creature Shock looks great and sounds pretty good, but there isn't much of a game to get your teeth into. It's a nice diversion for a while, but if you want more than just a nice-looking shoot-'em-up, then there are more exciting — and much cheaper — games out there than this one.

CREATURE SHOCK

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENT./ARGONAUT

(081) 960 2255

£49.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 5Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...

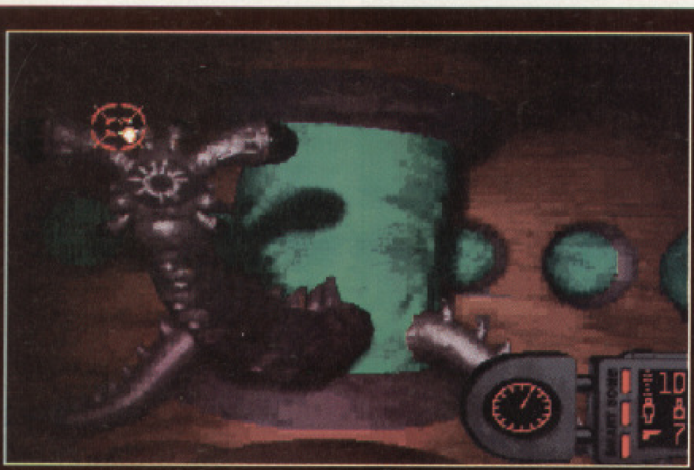
- The 3D Studio monsters are absolutely superb.
- The cutscenes (especially the death scenes) and the digitised speech are excellent.

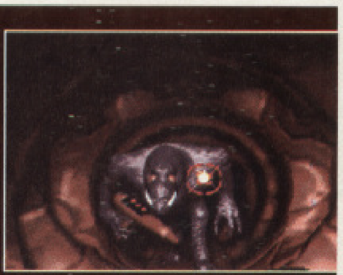
...AND THE BAD

- You just wave the gun cross-hair around and press 'Fire' when it's pointing at an alien weak spot, then repeat ad nauseam.
- It's an atmospheric game but, as a result, there's not much action.
- The 3D space sections are frustrating and very fiddly.

Overall

50%



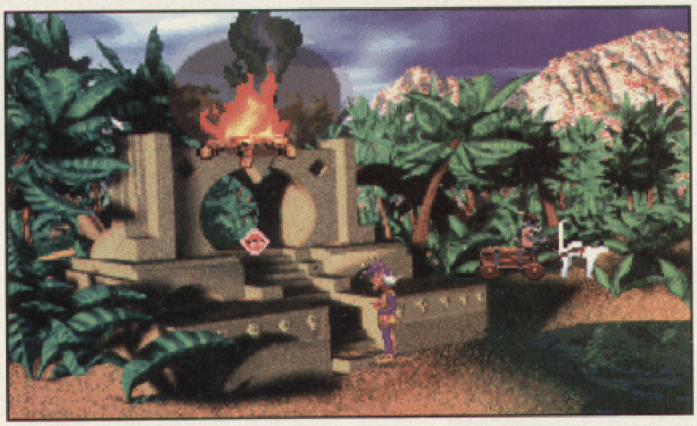


The slime-drenched intestines of the alien asteroid are crawling with monsters. The gun-wielding guards (above) are easy to kill, but the bigger monsters, like the Mantis-type thing (left), need to be shot repeatedly in their weak points. All of the aliens in the the game are beautifully animated, but remember, graphics maketh not the game...

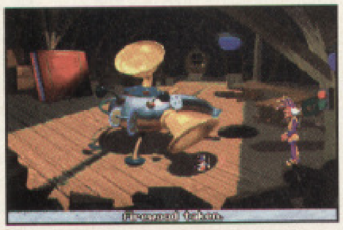
Malcolm's Revenge CD

The Legend Of Kyrandia Book 3

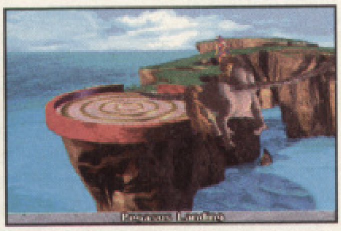
"Jester minute," ponders David Upchurch, "isn't this the new graphic adventure from Virgin?"



Malcolm's adventures eventually lead him to a strange island, where the dogs have enslaved the cats. Naturally, the cats are now planning a rebellion — and they want you to help...



Your old abode, the toy factory, isn't quite the place of joy and wonder it used to be.



Thanks to it being on CD, Malcolm's Revenge boasts some lovely animated sequences.

Westwood Studio's Kyrandia series of graphic adventures have a strange reputation. While it's widely acknowledged that they're as technically accomplished as anything by LucasArts or Sierra, in the storyline department they're considered to be a bit... well, a bit *wet*, frankly.

Chisel-jawed Brandon, the hero of Book 1, was a goody-goody big girl's blouse and as bland as blancmange, while Xanthia, the heroine of Book 2, was slightly spunkier but still suffered from a serious personality by-pass. This was a great pity because, those charmless lead characters aside, they weren't bad adventures.

For this reason, I was looking forward to Malcolm's Revenge, the third instalment in the Kyrandia saga. As the title implies, Book 3 centres around the evil-minded antics of Malcolm the Jester, the charismatically-wicked baddy from the first Kyrandia game. And, best of all, you get to control him! Now, I thought, we can have some *fun*...

As fans of the series will remember, Malcolm was turned into a stone statue by that wimp Brandon at the climax of Book 1, but now he's free once again, thanks to the electrifying, life-giving properties of a chance strike by a bolt of lightning. And as Malcolm slowly comes to, there's only one thought on his mind — revenge...

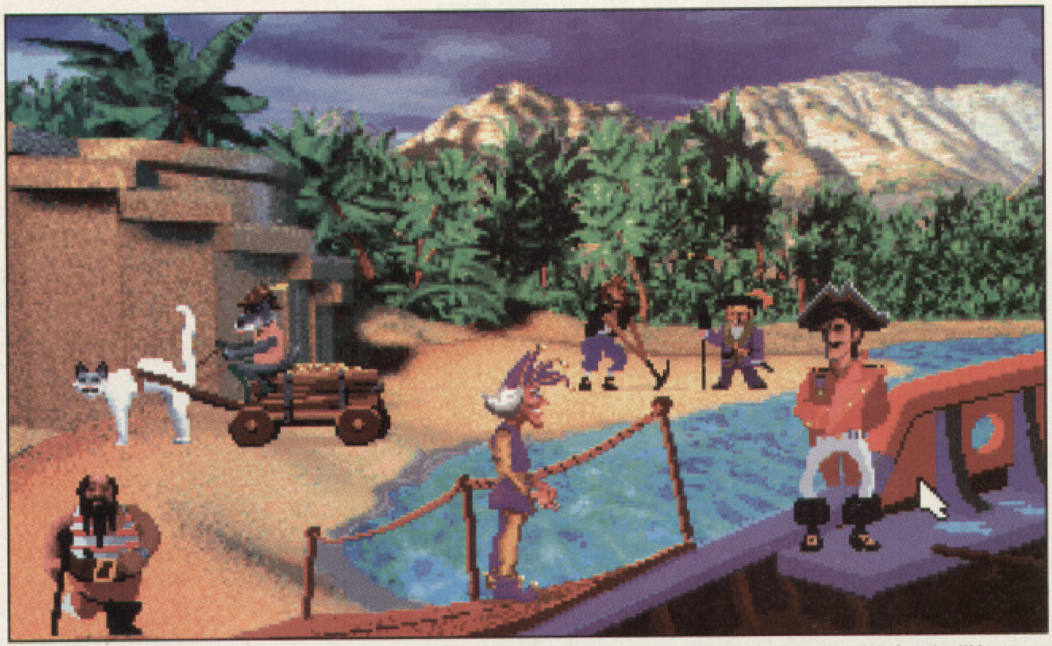
These earth-shattering events — and some fascinating background about Malcolm's mischievous childhood and his equally-troublesome teenage years — are related to the player via one of the most beautiful and truly cinematic pre-rendered intros ever to grace the PC's monitor screen.

Of course, after this audio-visual *tour de force*, the in-game graphics come as a slight disappointment. Interestingly, Westwood have opted to render the backgrounds, rather than having them first hand-painted and then scanned in. But while the results look quite nice, they have that atmosphere-sapping 'clinical' look that all rendered images have.

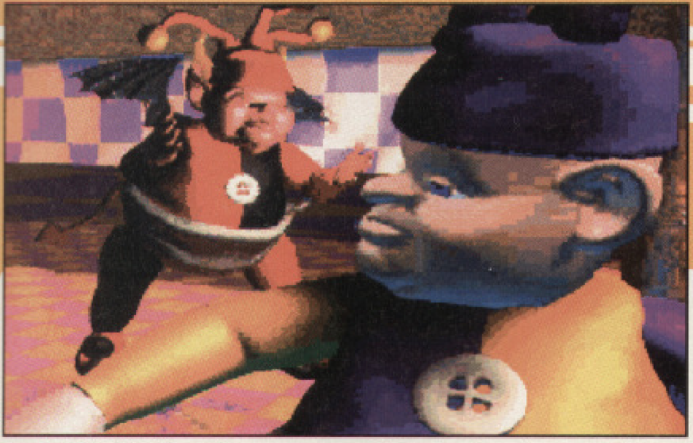
As the characters are hand-drawn sprites, there's a noticeable incongruity between them and the backgrounds. The animation of the characters is also lacking — what's there is of good quality, but should Malcolm, say, turn a dial, then the dial will just turn — you won't actually see Malcolm reach up and turn it himself.

In the sound department, Malcolm's Revenge fares somewhat better. The music, though a touch repetitive at times, is pleasant and the digitised speech — this is a CD game, remember? — is generally well-performed, although some of the accents are a little dubious. Malcolm himself sounds like Mr Burns from The Simpsons, which is no bad thing, actually.

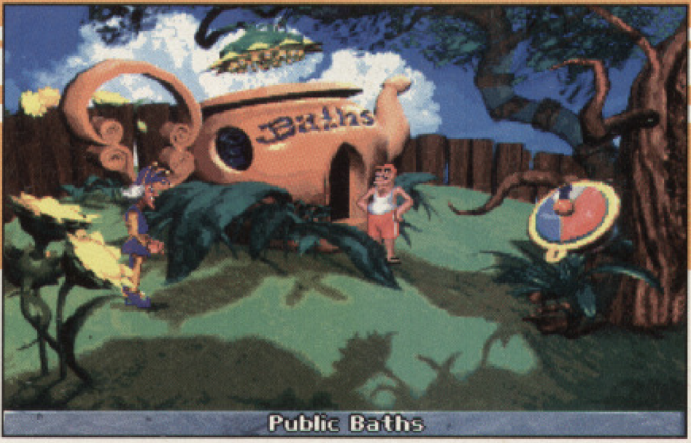
But enough about those lovely audio-visuals, what of the game itself? As I mentioned earlier, I rather fancied the idea of playing the part of evil Malcolm and letting the cutesy-cutesy, sickly-sweet inhabitants of Kyrandia feel my wrath (I'm a vicious sod at heart). So it came as a bit of a blow to discover that the lightning bolt had not only given Malcolm life again, it has dispelled his magic powers too. Thus, the once-mighty jester is forced to take a more cerebral approach to his revenge



Does this scene look a little, well, *familiar*? Somehow, you've got to prove to these pirates that you're a master of magic before they'll let you onboard and ferry you back to Kyrandia.



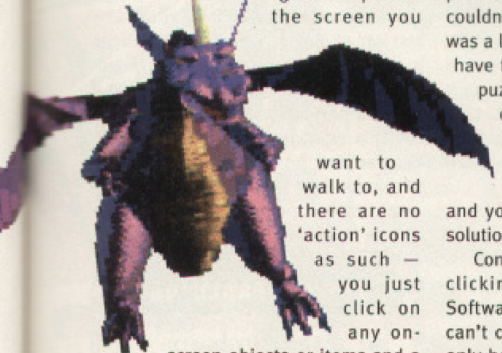
Gunther, Malcolm's bad conscience, pops up several times throughout the game to make painfully unfunny remarks about your progress — or lack of it.



It took me ages to work out how to get into the public baths without being forced to go to prison. The secret, it transpired, is to lie about *everything*...

— in other words, this being a graphic adventure, he has to solve loads of puzzles and talk to lots of people.

Malcolm's Revenge boasts one of the simplest player interfaces I've ever seen. You move around by simply clicking on the part of the screen you want to walk to, and there are no 'action' icons as such — you just click on any on-screen objects or items and a logical action will, if at all possible, be performed on it, i.e. you click on a lever to pull it, or click on a closed door to open it, etc.



Naturally, some objects can be picked up and either used on other objects (again, one click is all it takes) or stored in your inventory. This lurks just off-screen in a menu panel, and only pops up into view when you try to move your mouse pointer off the bottom of the screen.

While this is all very clever, there are problems. For one thing, it's often very hard working out what is useful and/or pick-uppable and what isn't. And I couldn't help feeling that the interface was a little *too* basic — you don't really have to think about how to solve the puzzles; if in doubt, you simply click on everything with everything else. And you'll end up doing this quite a bit because some of the puzzles are pretty obscure, and you tend to stumble across their solutions by chance rather than by skill.

Conversations are initiated by simply clicking on people. As with Access Software's Under A Killing Moon, you can't choose what you say to people, only how you say it. On the off-screen menu panel is a 'mood dial' which you can switch between 'Normal', 'Nice' and 'Lying', and Malcolm will speak and respond to people accordingly. Personally, I found this all very confusing and annoying to use at first and, as with the puzzles, using it successfully seems to depend more on trial and error than skill.

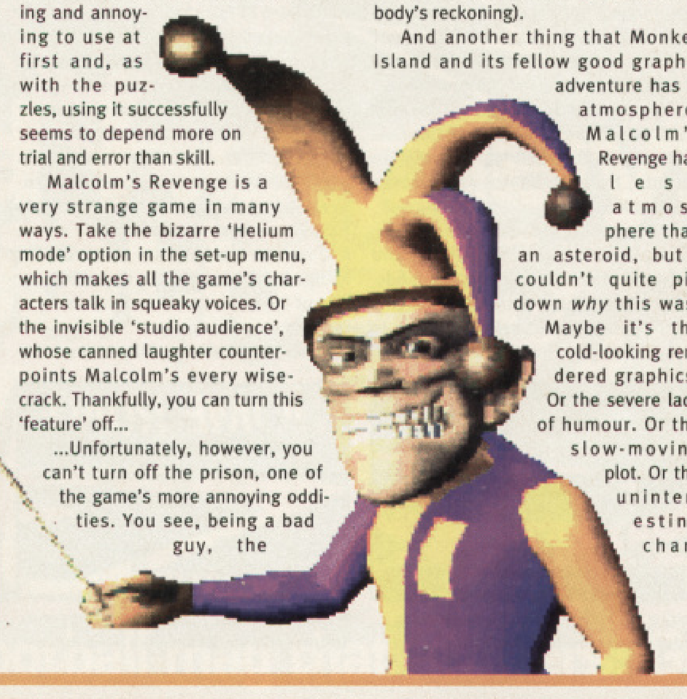
Malcolm's Revenge is a very strange game in many ways. Take the bizarre 'Helium mode' option in the set-up menu, which makes all the game's characters talk in squeaky voices. Or the invisible 'studio audience', whose canned laughter counterpoints Malcolm's every wisecrack. Thankfully, you can turn this 'feature' off...

...Unfortunately, however, you can't turn off the prison, one of the game's more annoying oddities. You see, being a bad guy, the people of Kyrandia aren't too chuffed at seeing you up and about again. Should they spot you, they'll report you to local sheriff. And if the sheriff catches you (something of an inevitability, given the map layout) you're slapped in prison and literally forced to do hard labour — making ten doilies, a repetitive and very dull task in reality and in the game — before you're released again. Of course, when you're first exploring and learning who and what's where, you tend bump into those pesky Kyrandians by mistake quite a bit... which means lots of trips to the prison. Oh joy.

"Hang on" you say, "you reckon that The Secret Of Monkey Island is brilliant, but that had lots of weird puzzles and idiosyncrasies!" Yes, I know — but I'm prepared to overlook Monkey Island's little faults because it's *funny*. Malcolm's Revenge, on the other hand, isn't. In fact, if Malcolm's a jester as he claims to be, he should be done under the Trade Descriptions Act — his so-called gags make Stan Boardman seem funny (a pretty amazing feat by anybody's reckoning).

And another thing that Monkey Island and its fellow good graphic adventure has is atmosphere. Malcolm's Revenge has less atmosphere than an asteroid, but I couldn't quite pin down *why* this was. Maybe it's the cold-looking rendered graphics. Or the severe lack of humour. Or the slow-moving plot. Or the uninteresting characters. Or those often illogical puzzles. Whatever the reason, Malcolm's Revenge is a curiously uninvolving affair — should you get really stuck, you'll find it hard to summon the enthusiasm to persevere.

Malcolm's Revenge is professionally produced, very slickly done and wonderfully pretty, but ultimately its several faults conspire to make it quite a dull, tedious game. One can't help feeling that perhaps it's time Westwood bid farewell to Kyrandia, and set sail for lands a-new.



It's a bit like...

...Almost any graphic adventure you'd care to mention, to be honest. Graphics aside, however, there's little in terms of gameplay to lift it above the cream of the genre, such as Sam & Max and Day Of The Tentacle, or even near-misses such as Beneath A Steel Sky for that matter. Er, that's enough Kyrandia now, eh Westwood?

MALCOLM'S REVENGE^CD

VIRGIN/WESTWOOD STUDIOS

(081) 960 2255

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 11Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Gravis UltraSound, Pro Audio Spectrum, Audiotrix Pro, Ensoniq Soundscape and Microsoft Sound System soundcards.

THE GOOD...

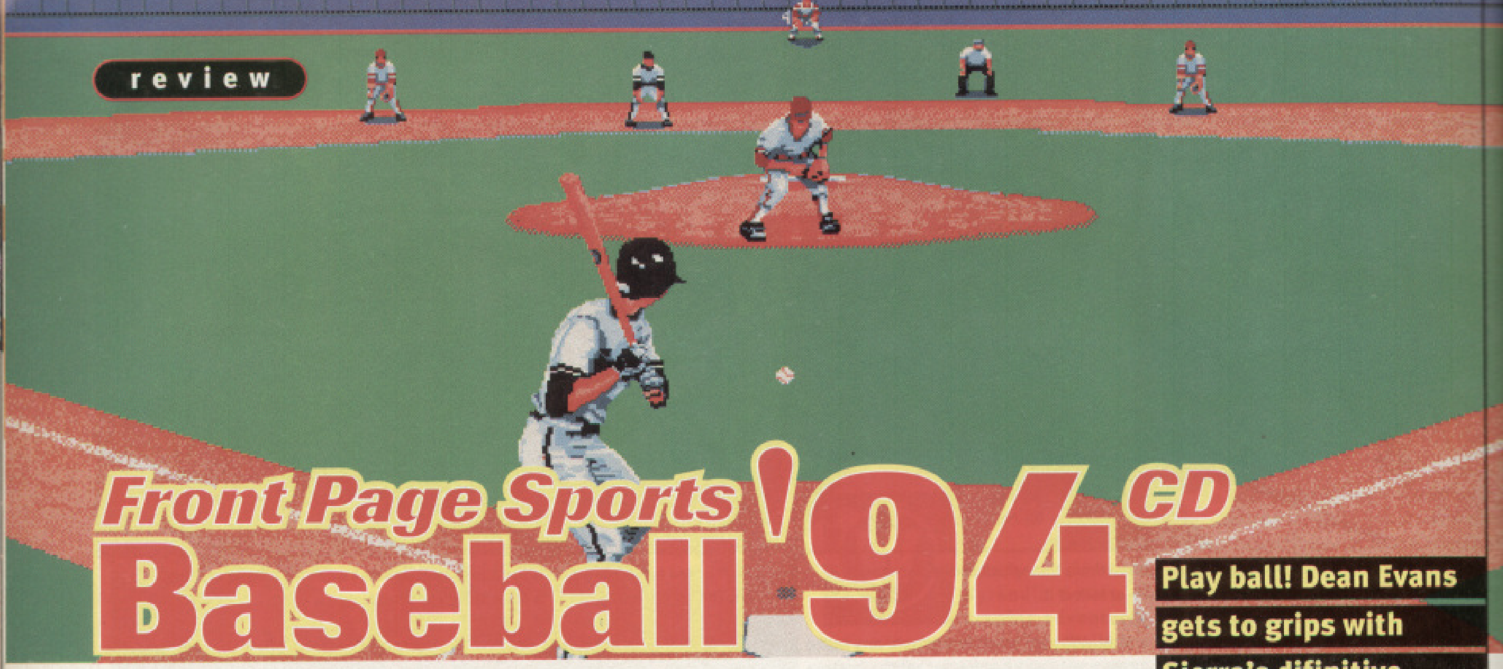
- Has an absolutely fabulous rendered intro.
- Malcolm sounds like Mr Burns from The Simpsons — hoot!

...AND THE BAD

- The puzzles are often too obscure for comfort.
- The whole game lacks atmosphere and humour.
- The simple player interface is a little too simple for my tastes.

Overall

71%



Front Page Sports Baseball '94 CD

Play ball! Dean Evans gets to grips with Sierra's difinitive baseball simulation.

Somehow, the British have never really warmed to baseball. It's not that we don't understand the game, far from it. I mean, how could we fail to grasp the principles of a sport that's just a jumped-up game of Rounders? Just how difficult can it be to smack a ball as hard as you can and then run round four bases anyway?

Before we get any further, if you're an avid baseball fan, I feel I must apologise. I'm afraid that my knowledge of baseball is restricted to two tiny experiences. First, I've watched the Oakland A's lose to the Boston Red Sox (in Oakland, I might add) and, second, I've watched the movie Major League at least twice. If these don't qualify me to talk about baseball with authority, then I don't know what does.

On the face of it, Baseball '94 seems to offer everything that you could want from a baseball sim. By far the greatest thing that it has going for it is the fact that in-game graphics look very impressive. As you can see they're pretty damned good, and this is because the resolution of the main part of the game has been jacked up to near SVGA quality.

Unfortunately, what you can't appreciate from the still shots here is that Dynamix has introduced some realistic player animation — in fact, the players have all been painstakingly rotoscoped. Although, after the ball has been hit, the game switches to a less-impressive polygon-style view so you can move the field, the detail of the players is so good that you can see them catch the ball in the outfield, and watch the batters shrug their shoulders disappointedly when they strike out for the third time.

Like most of the Front Page Sports series, Baseball '94 is extremely flexible. Naturally, there's the usual tidal wave of stats, but now you can choose how involved you want to be in the games that you play. For example, you can sit back and dabble with management in the Manage-Only mode, or you can switch to Arcade Play to get right down there on the pitcher's mound with your slow, fast and curve balls. You're not stuck in one mode for an entire game either, and if you want to rest for a while or want to try something different, you can change the in-game options whenever you like.

In Arcade Play you can have as much or as little control over your team as you wish. The batting, pitching, fielding and base running options can be toggled on or off, so if you just want to be a slogger or you fancy controlling the field, you can flick the unwanted options off and let the computer do the rest of the work. It's all very impressive stuff and this flexibility makes Baseball '94 very easy to get into, for both novice and veteran player alike.

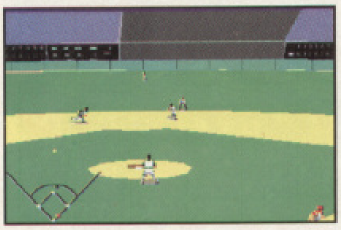
The control system is simple too and, fortunately, the batting, fielding and pitching options have a practice mode, which allows you to perfect your talents before you step out onto the plate in front of your glory-hungry fans.

When you're finally happy with your abilities, you can control your team using either the keyboard or a joystick, and each action, whether it's batting, fielding or pitching, is performed by a mix of menu choices and real-time waggling. For example, when you bat, you pick the type of swing you want to use and then, when the pitcher has thrown the ball, you press the fire button to time your swing so that bat meets ball and the ball subsequently leaves the ballpark in a high, graceful arc.

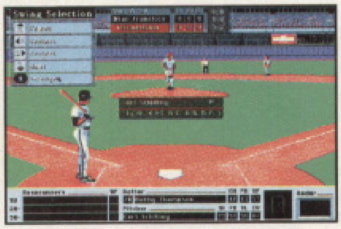
Pitching is just as straightforward. Like the batting, there are up to four different types of pitch available to the pitcher (i.e. Fastball, Slider, etc) and each one can be thrown high, low, left, right, etc. And when you finally decide that you want to take control of the fielders as well, all you have to do is guide your designated fielder to a catch zone, just like catching a football in an American Football game.

As I've mentioned, realism is the watchword in Baseball '94, and if you're a particularly avid baseball fan, then you'll be pleased to hear that Baseball '94 also includes the effects of temperature, humidity and rain. Most of us won't care about all this at all, but you've got to remember that the realism is enhanced by these factors, not to mention the fact that the flight of the ball is based on a real physics model. Where and how far the balls are eventually hit is, like in real baseball, a true combination of the pitch speed and the swing of the bat.

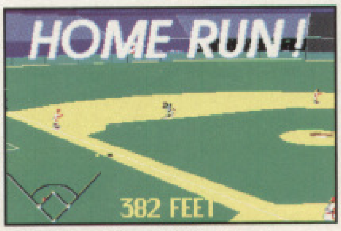
What more can I say? If you like baseball and you'd like to be able to play it on your own, with your favourite teams and lots of stats, then FPS: Baseball '94 is a good, solid baseball sim. It's no substitute for the real thing, of course, but if you're a baseball buff, I can confidently say that you can't do better than this. You can wait for Hardball 4, of course, but remember, there aren't *that* many baseball games out there...



After you've smacked the ball as hard as you can, the view switches to the fielding mode.



Batting is simplicity itself. Choose a swing and then press fire to hit the ball.



If you do everthing right, the ball sails gracefully over the stands and it's a home run!!!

FPS BASEBALL '94

SIERRA/DYNAMIX

(0734) 303322

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 15Mb of hard disk space and CD-Rom drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; Sound Blaster and Pro Audio Spectrum soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- A good, accurate simulation of America's favourite sport.
- Field up to 48 teams in up to three leagues.
- Fully-rotatable camera views and a replay facility – of course.

...AND THE BAD

- It's not very exciting, but then baseball is just a jumped-up game of rounders, isn't it?

Overall

80%

MATCH
HALF
ITALY 0-1 SWITZERLAND
MATCH
THE SOCCER MAG FOR THE FOOTB
MATCH
ALEX FERGUSON TALKS TO YOU!
SHARP
he plays computer games...
he reads MATCH...
...and he plays football.
HARP
What else is there to do?
MATCH ~ the football mag that matters! Get it every week!

The Colonel is the world's greatest PI. Fifteen years ago he and Tex had a bust-up over an important case, and they now share an uneasy semi-friendship.

Chelsee Bando runs the local newstand. As she lives quite literally on the streets, she's a prime source for information and gossip on events in the neighbourhood.

Louie Lamintz is the big-hearted mutant who runs the Brew & Stew cafe. He's not the brightest of chaps, so it's ironic that his house speciality is fried brains.

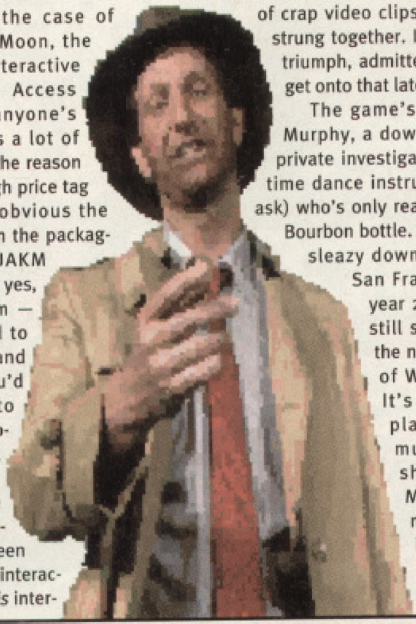
Rook Garner owns the pawnshop. A small, slightly-bitter man, it's Rook who offers Tex his first case — finding out who stole a valuable bracelet from his shop.

Know Your **Neighbourhood!**

David Upchurch dons a grey mac and drags moodily on a cigarette in Access Software's eagerly-awaited 'interactive movie'.

If you're anything like me, then a cold shiver probably runs down your spine every time somebody uses that much-hated term 'interactive movie'. Yeah, 'interactive',right — like I get to make the plot branch every five or ten minutes, after having to watch some poorly-acted, weakly-scripted and ineptly-directed 'movie' footage that wouldn't be considered good enough for You've Been Framed, let alone the cinema screen. And to make matters even worse, I have to pay £50 for the privilege...

...Or£60, in the case of Under A Killing Moon, the long-awaited 'interactive movie' from Access Software. By anyone's reckoning that's a lot of cash, but part of the reason for the game's high price tag is immediately obvious the moment you open the packaging; you see, UAKM comes on four — yes, FOUR, count 'em — CDs. If you used to own an Amiga, and thought that you'd said goodbye to tedious disc-swapping, then think again...



Of course, like every other developer, Access is keen to stress that its interactive movie really *is* interactive, while retaining all the glossy production values of a Hollywood blockbuster. And, to be fair, in most respects Access has been pretty successful at achieving these aims — one thing's for sure, UAKM is much more than a bunch of crap video clips haphazardly strung together. It's not a *total* triumph, admittedly, but we'll get onto that later...

The game's 'star' is Tex Murphy, a down-on-his-luck private investigator (and part-time dance instructor — don't ask) who's only real friend is the Bourbon bottle. He lives in the sleazy downtown area of San Francisco in the year 2042AD, a city still suffering from the nuclear ravages of World War III. It's a strange place, where mutants rub shoulders with Mafia-style mobsters — imagine Bladerunner set in 1940's Chicago and you've got a pretty good idea of what it's like.

Desperate for some work — any sort of work — Tex accepts the job of investigating a small-time burglary at the local pawnshop. Little does he know it, but this simple-looking case will eventually lead him into contact with a beautiful countess and a mutant shape-shifter, and pit him against a weird cult of Satanists who have hatched a foolproof plan to bring about the end of the world! Phew! Bogart never used to have these sorts of problems...

Under A Killing Moon is essentially a very pretty graphic adventure — strip away the impressive sound and visuals, and you're left with some fairly traditional 'Use Object A on Object B, and give Object C to Character D' gameplay. And UAKM's sound and visuals *are* impressive. Each game location is a highly-detailed, high-resolution 3D model (imagine a Doom-like environment with massive knobs on) and you have total freedom to explore its every nook and cranny — well, you do once you've mastered the control method.

Yup, getting around is a touch tricky at first. All movement is governed by the mouse — slide the mouse left or right

Under A Killing Moon

CD

Francesca Lucido runs the Slice O' Heaven Pizza Parlour. She's desperate to dig up some evidence that her husband is having an affair. Hmm, perhaps Tex can help...

Beek Nariz is a jittery mutant lowlife who keeps his big ears (and his trunk) close to the ground. He's an invaluable source of info on the underworld.

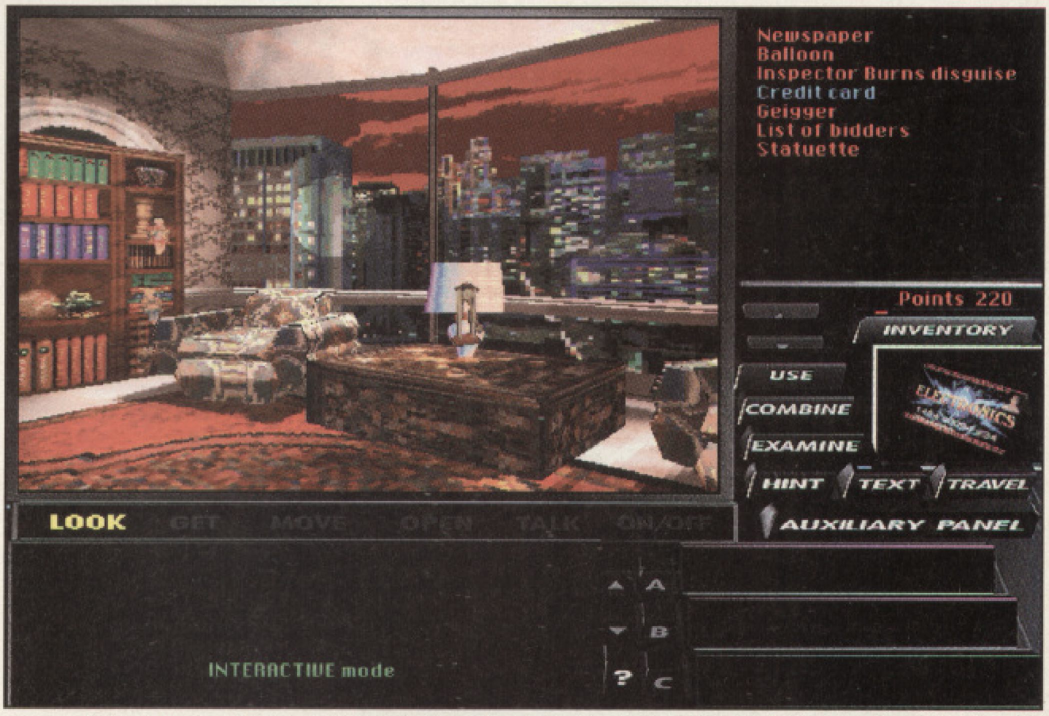
Mac Malden is a cop who worked with Tex years ago on the Martian Memorandum case. And as any good PI knows, it's always handy having a friend on the force.

The Shape-Shifter is a hideously-gifted mutant who can change his appearance at will. He works for the cult who are trying to engineer the end of the world.

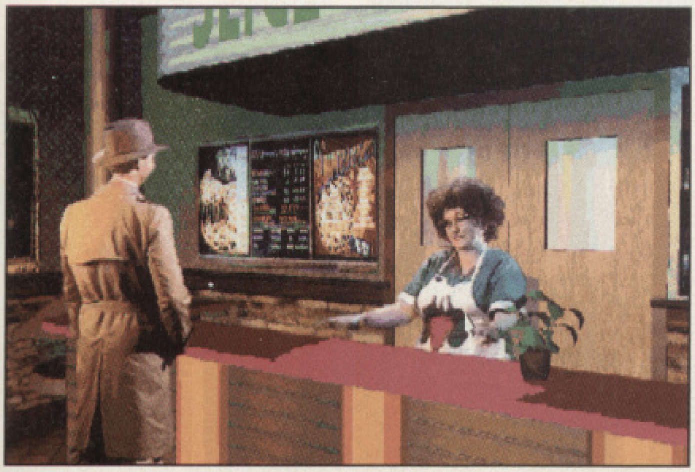
and you rotate the view, push it forwards or backwards and you move accordingly. While all this sounds fine in theory, in practice it's all too easy to 'overshoot' your mark and end up facing in totally the wrong direction. But it doesn't take *that* long to get used to the system, especially as clicking on the right-hand mouse button can be used as a 'brake', and once you get the hang of it all you'll be investigating with the best of 'em.

As well as moving around, you can also look up and down (although some of the graphics do get very strangely distorted when you do this) and, of course, you can interact with the game-world by tapping the Space bar, which puts you into the appropriately-named 'interactive mode'. When you do this, a mouse pointer appears and, when it's moved over an object, the possible actions you can perform on it are highlighted in the menu bar at the bottom of the game window.

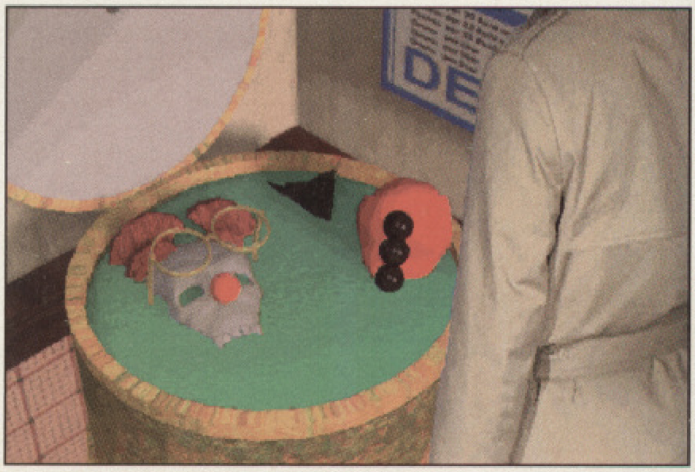
The actions, which you cycle through by clicking the right mouse button and select by clicking the left, allow you to examine objects, pick them up, move them, turn them on and off, etc. Objects that you've found and added to your



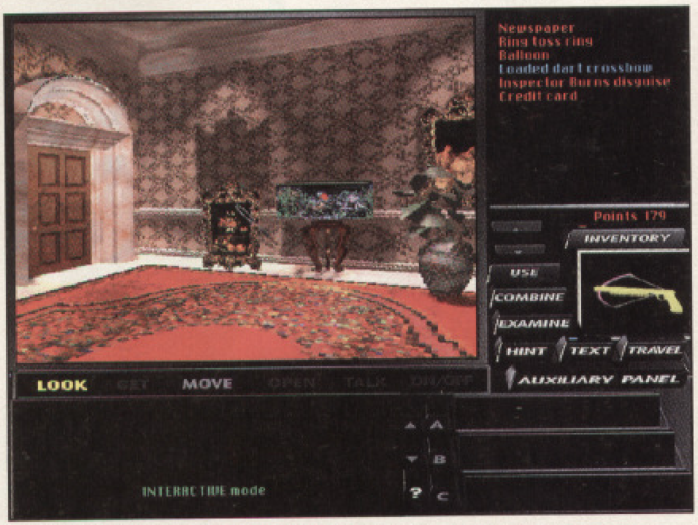
Underneath UAKM's beautiful graphics and wonderful CD-quality sound lurks a fairly traditional graphic adventure, complete with icon menus and a multiple-choice conversation system. That's not to say it's a bad game, though...



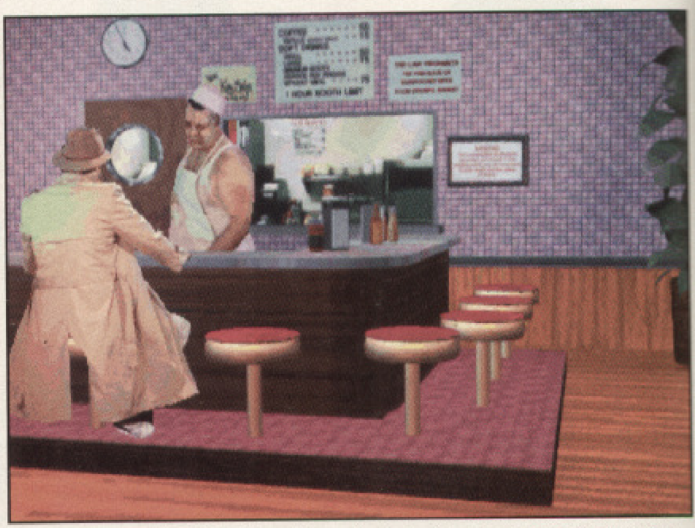
Can you help Francesca get the evidence to divorce her philandering husband? You'll have to if you ever want to finish the game...



So *this* is what happened to poor old Rusty — he was thrown into a vat of acid by the hulking criminal Flemm. Ah, the tears of a clown...



You really need 16Mbs of RAM to see UAKM at its best, but even with just 4Mbs of RAM on-board the game can still look very pretty at times, as shown here.



A friend in need is a friend indeed — which must make Louie your best pal. He'll always give you a drink on the house if you're desperate.

inventory can also be manipulated, examined, combined with other objects and so on. It's all very easy to pick up and get familiar with.

You can also talk to any people you meet by clicking on them when the 'Talk' icon is selected, and this is typically when the 'movie' part of the 'interactive movie equation' comes into play. Conversations take the usual 'multiple-choice' route, but instead of clicking on an option to say, for example, "Hi, I'm Tex Murphy — pleased to meet you", you'd click on the vaguer option to "Greet formally, but warmly." In other words, you can only choose *how* you say something, no *what* you say. The system works well enough, and is perhaps inevitable given the amount of speech in the game, but it would have been nice to have a more defined idea of what you're saying when you select a speech option. As it stands, saying the right things at the right time can be a slightly hit-and-miss affair.

Apart from during conversations, movie cut-scenes are also used as 'rewards' when you perform a vital action, such as when Tex has to fish a priceless statuette out of a high-security vault with a fishing rod, and also to illustrate key developments in the increasingly-complex narrative.

Although the direction of these movie scenes is pretty flat (often they're viewed simply face-on or from the side), the quality of the acting is pretty good — but with the assembled talents of such actors as Brian Keith, Russell Means and Margot Kidder, that's only to be expected. Even so, I can't see Steven Spielberg having any sleepless nights...

Still, it has to be said that playing Under A Killing Moon is a mightily impressive experience — if your machine is up to the task, of course. As you might have guessed, this level of technical brilliance doesn't come cheap, and to play Under A Killing Moon at anything approaching its best you really need something like a 33MHz 486 *at least*. You can get away with playing it on a slower machine, but then you have to start shrinking the 3D window and a lot of the effect is lost.

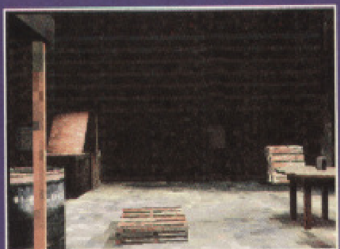
You also need a fair whack of RAM. Access 'recommend' 16Mb, and there's a card in the box which helpfully explains how cheap RAM is these days. UAKM will run on less, to a minimum of 4Mb, but the background graphics in the 3D sections tend to get very blocky and confusing to look at — in fact, on one occasion I accidentally walked into a closet thinking that the jumble of coloured blocks lying through a doorway indicated another room.

(Above top) Well, I say! Hell-low!
(Above) Ah, the lovely Chelsee — why can't she see that under Tex's worn exterior beats the heart of a fine and decent man?

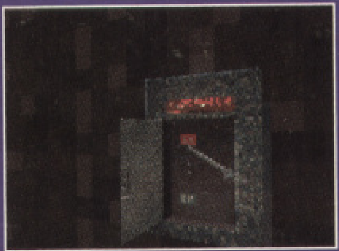
Killer Klown!

Thanks to some skillful detective work, I've deduced that a man called Flemm robbed Rook's pawnshop and stole the bracelet. I've also found out that Flemm murdered Rusty the Clown, the weirdo who used to run the local novelty shop, and that he is still haunted by the foul deed. Gee, I wonder if that information will come in handy at all...?

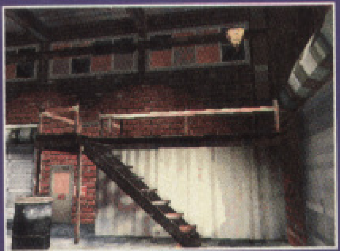
Flemm hangs out in this old disused warehouse. He's a big guy and there's no way I'll be able to get the bracelet off him by force. Somehow I'll have come up with a way to trick him into giving it up...



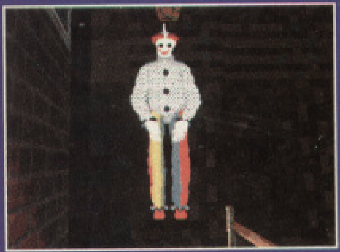
Thankfully, Flemm's not around at the moment, giving me a good chance to have a snoop around. Hey, what's this? Oh, a lever — I wonder what it does? Can't be any harm in pulling it...

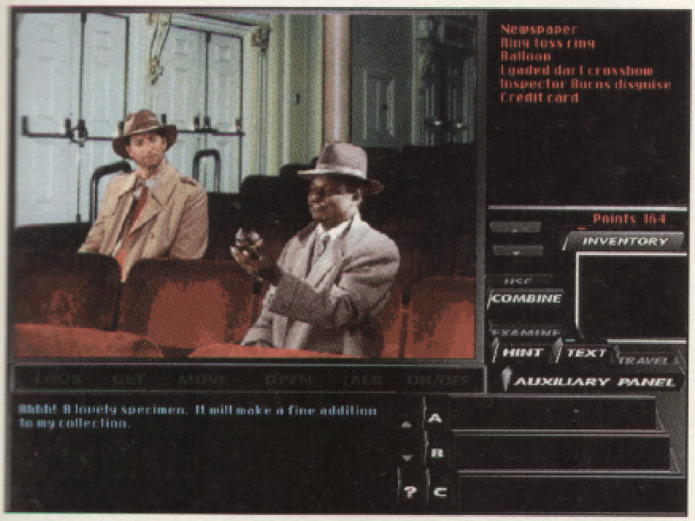


Ah, it moves that motorised hook hanging from the ceiling. By positioning it over that platform, I can just reach it. Hey, I've just thought of a plan that'll scare the living daylights out of Flemm...



Earlier on I found an old clown doll in the ruins of Rusty's novelty shop. Hanging it from the hook on the ceiling, my trap is all baited and set. Oh, I hear footsteps — Flemm's coming...





Newspaper
Ring toss ring
Balloon
Loaded dart crossbow
Inspector Burns disguise
Credit card

Ahhh! A lovely specimen. It will make a fine addition to my collection.

Franco Franco deals in black-market valuables. Take care when dealing with him — he's very dangerous to know. Say the wrong thing, and you could end up dead.

But if 4Mbs is all you have, and you can't afford more, UAKM is still very playable. You *do* get used to the blockiness in time, and in some ways it helps you to solve the game — because 'essential' items, such as clues you've got to pick up or objects you've got to examine, remain in hi-res, they're often easier to see against a blocky background than a 'proper', 16Mb-enhanced, highly-detailed one.

Okay, so we've established that Under A Killing Moon is interactive, and we've established that it's a movie (sort of), but is it any *good*? Well...

...Yes, mostly. A game like Under A Killing Moon lives or dies on the joint strengths of its storyline, its atmosphere and its puzzles. In both of the former areas UAKM scores very highly. Sharing the adventures of the world-weary Tex is a very enjoyable experience, mainly thanks to his neat line in cynical humour and the off-beat nature of the characters he meets.

True, it's not the most *believable* gameworld I've ever come across (which takes the urgent edge off the world-saving a little bit) but it's fun to explore, nonetheless. The air of artificiality isn't helped any by the look of the digitised characters as they move about the computer-rendered backdrops — don't get me wrong, this is the best 'computer movie' stuff I've yet seen, but the characters still look slightly pasted on and out of place. They also have a unnerving tendency to 'freeze' when they're not talking, presumably to save on vital processor power.

As for the puzzles... They're pretty good. Most have logical solutions, but that's not to say that they're all easy. In some of the puzzles, however, the illusion of total freedom clears a little, and the same linear workings that plague other 'interactive movies' can be seen all to clearly.

Take the bit where Tex is trying to get into the hotel, for example. In order to do so, he has to get past Ardo, the slow-witted receptionist. Ardo has been given orders not to let anyone past — and that includes Tex. By chatting to Ardo, though, you learn that he's a big fan of Inspector Burns, a grotesque, horribly-scarred figure in a fireman's outfit who hosts a kiddies' TV show. Sure enough, after exploring the game's other locations you discover a fireman's outfit and, in another location, an Inspector Burns mask — put 'em together and you've got one ready-to-wear Inspector Burns disguise.

When I got to this stage I thought "Brilliant. All I've got to do now is put on the disguise and go and talk to Ardo, and he'll be so amazed at seeing Inspector Burns, that he'll let me do whatever I want." And I was right... eventually.

You see, even though I had a disguise, Ardo wouldn't even talk to me, let alone let me past. However, help was at hand in the form of UAKM's on-line help facility, which can be called up at any time. Asking for clues costs you 4 points (points are awarded to you as you solve puzzles, the aim being to achieve a maximum score of 1000) but, being thoroughly stuck, I swallowed my pride, forfeited my valuable points and looked at the hints. Ah, *of course*, I hadn't inflated the balloon which I'd found earlier before entering hotel!

The problem is, you don't actually need the balloon to get past Ardo — although you do need it in the hotel itself. These little quirks are, admittedly, very rare, but they're still very stupid. Why can't I get into the hotel even though I seem to have all the stuff I need? Why? Because the programmers' said so.

UAKM's linearity also reveals itself in the game's structure. For a start, UAKM is split into days, and the next day only starts when you've solved key problems and puzzles. On top of that, the puzzles tend to be concentrated in very small areas. In the aforementioned hotel, for example, there are only four locations to explore, but absolutely loads of things to do in each of them — and the plot will only progress once you've sorted them all out.

Thus a large portion of the game is spent shuffling backwards and forwards through the same locations which gets very tedious. Of course, this is a problem that plagues a lot of adventures, but it's particularly noticeable in UAKM's case, especially as it takes a bloody age for each location to be loaded in off the CD.

But although I've gone on a bit about the linearity, I should add that it doesn't really affect your enjoyment of the game too much, and for the most part you're so engrossed trying to solve the puzzles that you never even notice it.

All in all, Under A Killing Moon isn't the toughest adventure you'll ever play, but it's certainly one of the prettiest and best sounding. As an 'interactive movie' it's not completely successful, and at a penny short of £60 it's not exactly cheap either, but it's an enjoyable-enough romp while it lasts. True, it's not going to placate the sceptics, but it will certainly keep everyone else thoroughly amused.

It's a bit like...

...One of the older, icon-based graphic adventures, like Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis or The Secret Of Monkey Island 2. No, really, it does. Replace all those fancy 3D locations and movie cut-scenes with plain 2D backdrops, and you're left with a pretty traditional (and fairly easy) point-'n'-click adventure. It's the appliance of science, Brian...

Well, well, well.

UNDER A KILLING MOON^{CD}

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MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, 8Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Roland, Pro Audio Spectrum and Microsoft Sound System soundcards, amongst many others.

THE GOOD...

- If you've got loadsaRAM and a decent PC, the 3D is totally amazing.
- Plenty of good, solid adventuring to be had.
- The best 'computer movie' stuff yet seen on PC.

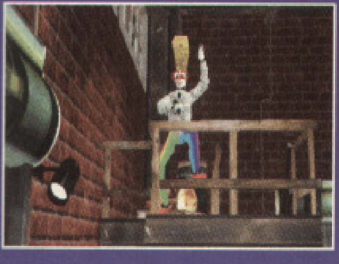
...AND THE BAD

- The freedom you have is an illusion — UAKM is really quite linear.
- The digitised characters look pasted on to the backgrounds.
- The lengthy loading times and disc-swapping are a pain.

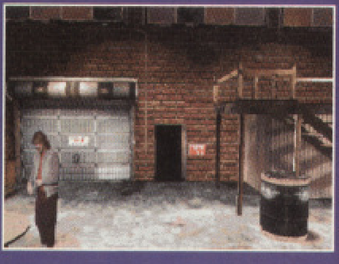
Overall

86%

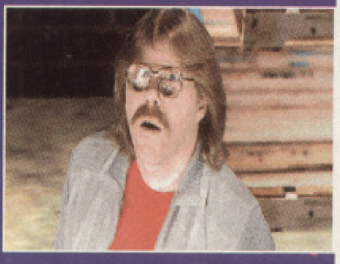
Hiding behind some boxes near the lever, I watch as Flemm walks in and throws a bunch of keys and — yes! — the bracelet onto a table in the corner of the room. Time to set off my trap...



I throw the lever and the clown doll lurches into life, gliding eerily across the ceiling. I add to the spooky 'Twilight Zone' effect by wailing "Flemm — it's me, Rusty. I'm back from the dead!"



Flemm looks up and his face goes white when he sees the terrifying 'apparition'. Forgetting all about the bracelet and his keys, he legs it. Ah, I love it when a plan comes together!



Cyclemania CD

Get your motor running, head out on the highway. Dean Evans looks for adventure in Accolade's 500cc racer.

If you've ever played Road Rash on the Mega Drive or the 3DO console then you'll have a good idea of what Accolade's impressive-looking racing game, Cyclemania, is all about. If you haven't, then all you really need to know is that Cyclemania involves driving a souped-up motorbike around five digitised courses, racing against other bikers and dodging the oncoming traffic.

Like any other race game, the idea behind Cyclemania is obviously to win every race that you compete in. It's very simple and, at first glance, quite exhilarating stuff. You can choose to ride in either a practice session, a one-off race or in a full-blown championship, and rather than chucking your high-powered dream machine around a purpose-built race-track, there are five twisty road courses to negotiate instead.

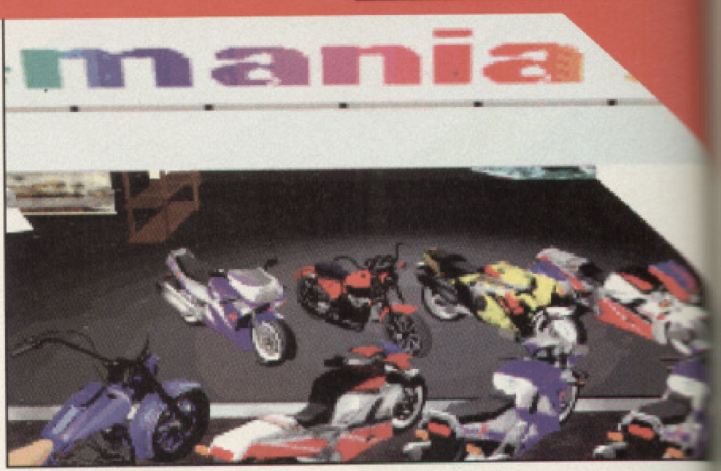
In fact, Cyclemania has two major things going for it. The first is that there aren't, at least to my knowledge anyway, a huge amount of racing games that feature bikes. So, thumbs up to Cyclemania there. Secondly, Cyclemania proclaims itself as a "Full-Motion Video adrenalin rush" because, instead of using polygons to generate the landscape a la IndyCar Racing and Formula One Grand Prix, the game features five digitised courses including winding mountain passes and tree-lined backroads. Thumbs up once again.

Like, say, Rebel Assault or Novastorm, the FMV images scroll towards you and the bike sprites are overlaid on top of the digitised images. Rather than using a true first-person 3D view, Cyclemania views your bike from behind (like a chase view) and superimposes the dashboard onto the bottom of the screen. Initially, this view can be quite confusing but thankfully, because the controls are very simple (and you can use either the cursor keys or a joystick) and the bike handles very well, you can be burning rubber along the highways and byways after only a couple of minutes.

But while your attention can be distracted by the very nice digitised courses and the roaring sound effects, the actual racing part of the game is fairly bland. There are only the five courses to race on, and apart from your fellow competitors, there are only patches of oil, puddles of water and the oncoming traffic to dodge. To be fair, this 'traffic' is fairly varied, ranging from camper vans and trucks to highway patrolmen and even stray Friesian cows, but the gameplay never really rises up to become anything spectacular.

In fact, after a couple of races, Cyclemania can get quite dull indeed. It desperately tries to hold your attention with the championship mode, where if you finish in the top six you can win prize money which can be spent later in the shop to enhance the performance of your bike. And every time you crash, whether it's 150mph into a barrier or smack into the back of a Volkswagen Beetle, you get a full-motion video clip to illustrate it, showing either a motorcyclist losing control and crashing, a six-bike pile-up or a bloke humorously flying into a wall. It's all very nice but, like the gameplay, the video becomes a bit annoying after a while.

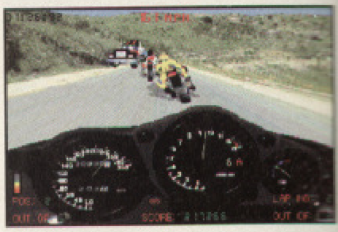
But, despite the fact that the gameplay in Cyclemania has a tendency to become a bit lifeless and tiresome, it's still an enjoyable and playable game.



There are three individual skill levels to suit all calibres of biker and also three competitor levels, so you can choose just how aggressive your rivals are going to be in a particular race.

Unfortunately, despite all the FMV and animated frills, Cyclemania just isn't very exciting. Screaming around a desert road track is quite absorbing, but in the long-term it doesn't have the appeal or the excitement of something like Road Rash, where you can punch and thump your opponents off the track and even get arrested by traffic cops.

But, as Road Rash isn't available on the PC (unless you buy — or win — Creative Lab's 3DO Blaster card; see the feature on page 23), Cyclemania is probably the best motor-cycle racing game around. It's a very slick game and, despite the fact that the motor-bikes and the cars look slightly out of place on top of the smoothly-scrolling FMV race courses, it's loud, fast and fairly entertaining. I give it a reluctant thumb up.



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33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 3Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; Sound Blaster and Pro Audio Spectrum soundcards.

THE GOOD...

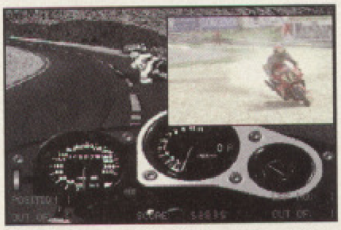
- Fast — and sometimes furious — motor-biking action.
- The digitised courses are very nice.
- Varying difficulty levels make it an easy game to get into.

...AND THE BAD

- There are only five courses.
- The gameplay can become very dull and tedious after a while.

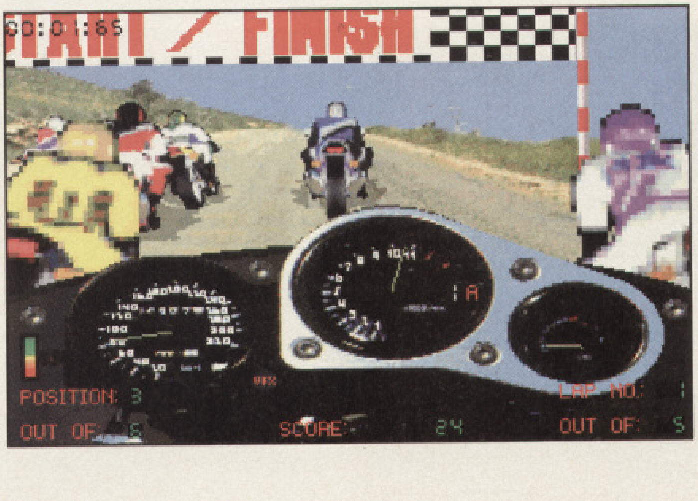
Overall

80%



(Above) If you tumble off of your bike at high speed, you're treated to a short FMV clip of a suitably nasty crash.

(Right) Although the dashboard along the bottom of the screen initially makes you think that you're driving a bike in the first-person, you're actually controlling the biker with the blue leathers and white helmet...



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Armoured Fist CD

Dean Evans slams in a Sabot as he tackles the long-awaited tank sim from Novalogic.

If you've ever played Novalogic's chopper game, Comanche: Maximum Overkill, you'll no doubt recall the Voxel Space 3D technology that was used to generate the undulating landscape. On the whole, Comanche was a nice game — a bit on the blocky side, admittedly, but if you stood about three feet away from the screen, and squinted a bit, it was actually a very playable and atmospheric shoot-'em-up.

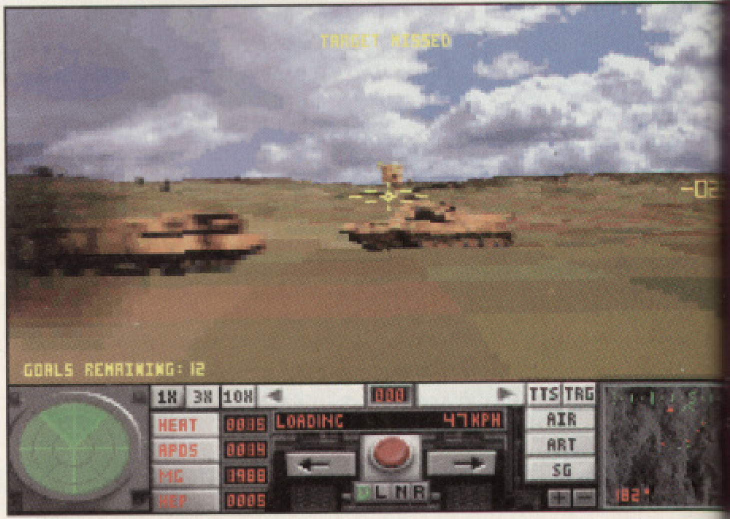
Unfortunately, Novalogic's new state-of-the-art tank simulation, Armoured Fist, also uses the Voxel Space 3D engine, and while the game is undoubtedly a very accurate simulation of modern tank warfare, with high-tech M1A2 tanks, thermal imaging and digitised speech, the limitations of the patent 3D routines have been cruelly exposed. I'm sorry, but Armoured Fist is, quite possibly, the ugliest-looking game of the year.

The static screenshots here don't really convey the true horror of the hideous, blocky graphics — they're even worse when they're moving. Just look at them. If the graphics in Comanche were considered chunky, the graphics in Armoured Fist are huge, skyscraper-sized slabs. It's almost impossible to see what's going on when the enemy, the buildings and even your own tanks, blend into the ground to become one huge mass of confusing pixels.

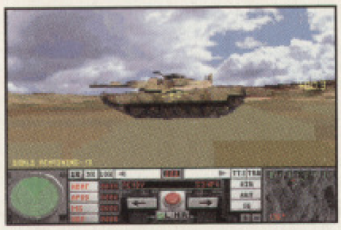
In fact, I found the graphics in Armoured Fist really painful to look at. They're absolutely dreadful. Any sense of realism that Novalogic hoped to create instantly disappears as soon as the first blocky landscape, complete with blocky trees and blocky fuel dumps, comes up on-screen. And this is a great shame, because Armoured Fist's cutscenes are stunning and, if you can ignore the graphics (and this is almost impossible), underneath lies quite a good simulation.

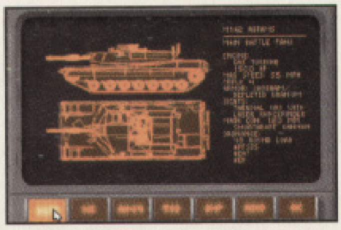
In fact, it reminds me a lot of MicroProse's old game M1 Tank Platoon, but having played Armoured Fist and given the choice between the two, I'd still go for the basic polygons of M1 every time. At least in M1 Tank Platoon, you could see that you were driving a tank — in Armoured Fist, the graphics are so bad you could be driving an ice-cream van with a gun turret and you wouldn't know the difference. As for shooting the enemy, you often can't tell the difference between a hill and a T-80.

Like M1 Tank Platoon, Armoured Fist not only allows you to drive a 25-ton mobile cannon, it also places you in command of up to sixteen armoured and mechanised units. So, if you choose to play the Americans, you can take control of the advanced M1A2 Abrams Battletank and the M3 Bradley IFV, or if you want to see the war from the other



(above) Okay, so the graphics don't look too bad here, but when the game is on your monitor, you lose all the definition and the detail.



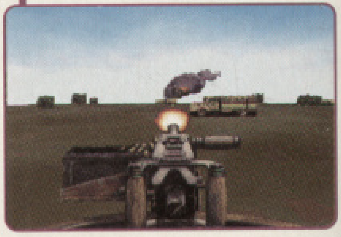


(Above top) In Armoured Fist, you control a platoon of four M1A2 tanks, and if you stand three feet away from the screen and squint a bit, they can look quite impressive.

(Above) The M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank can reach speeds of up to 55 mph, seats four and is available in camouflage or beige.

It's a bit like...

...1944: Across The Rhine. This World War Two tank sim was supposed to be on the shelves in time to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day landings, but so far it still hasn't appeared. But it will be ready soon, MicroProse assures us, and AOR will allow you to play either the US Army or the German Wehrmacht battling it out in the fields of France. Lke Armoured Fist, it's only available on CD-ROM.

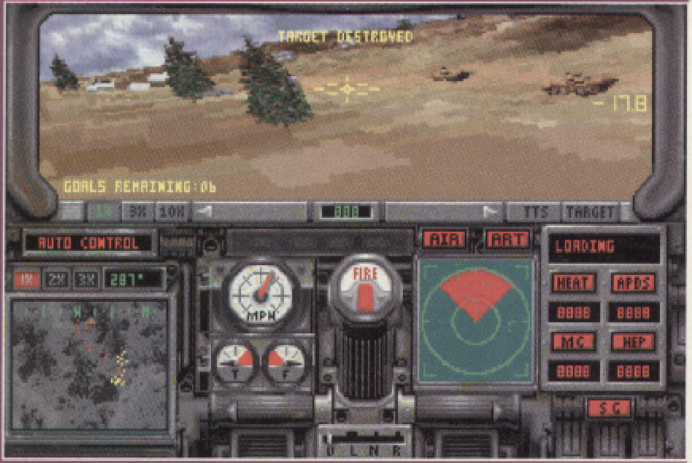


Beauty *And The Beast*

The cutscenes in Armoured Fist are stunning. Here a lone M1 Tank prowls the battlefield...

Having dodged the Russian Hind gunship, the M1 takes out a T-80 with a Sabot shell.

Then with its second shot, another tank bites the dust. God, this game looks brilliant...



... Er, on second thoughts, no it isn't. These are the in-game graphics. What a let-down.

side of the political fence, AF also allows you to drive the Soviet built T-80 and the BMP Armoured Personnel Carrier.

Whatever vehicle you choose, Armoured Fist lets you play a huge number of individual missions that are set in a variety of world hot-spots, including the Saudi desert, India and the Ukraine. There are also six campaign scenarios, one for each featured combat theatre. On the most basic level, you control four M1 Tanks, and your task is to complete your specific mission objectives (i.e. destroying communications centres, knocking out enemy armour, etc) with minimum casualties to your side.

As overall commander, you can fight the battles from the warm safety of the Command and Control Vehicle (CCV) or, if you're fond of tense, heart-stopping action, you can jump into a tank and trundle over the blocky landscape with the front-line soldiers. And, as if all this wasn't enough to hold your interest, Armoured Fist also features a built-in mission construction set, which allows you to create new battles and tactical challenges as diverse as your imagination will allow.

Graphics aside, Armoured Fist is a very atmospheric game. The gameplay is uncomplicated, the sound effects are excellent and the feeling of being squashed inside a tank is nicely conveyed by the snippets of digitised speech shouting "Sabot up" when a shell has been slammed into the breech, and "He's history!" when an enemy tank bites the proverbial big one.

The initial feeling that you get when you play Armoured Fist is one of total confusion, a sense that you don't know what or who is where. You could be attacked from any side, and if there's one thing that Armoured Fist does convey very well, it's that tank warfare is much more complicated than just trundling around firing shells at the enemy. Success requires strategy. You've got to use the terrain to your advantage, shielding yourself behind the hills and digging your tank in to present as small a target as possible.

As far as the gameplay is concerned, Armoured Fist doesn't appear to feature anything new in comparison with M1 Tank Platoon. Like M1, you can control and swap between more than one vehicle, you can call in artillery barrages and air strikes and, if you're fighting at night, you can use the high-tech infrared and thermal imaging systems that are fitted to you tank, so you can kill with confidence whatever the weather.

As a simulation, Armoured Fist isn't half bad. Novalogic is very proud of the fact that it is probably the most realistic tank simulation on the PC, and the programmers are confident that the translucent smoke effects and the realistic tactics set it apart from any other tank simulation on the market.

Well, yes, the smoke effects are very nice but, unfortunately, Armoured Fist will be remembered for its chunky visuals rather than the realism of the actual simulation. It's a nice game, with some wonderful cutscenes, but it's sadly let down by the in-game graphics. If you haven't got the message by now, I'll say it again. They are absolutely dreadful. No matter how good the simulation of tank warfare is, if you can't see what you're shooting at, you soon get very bored and fustrated indeed.

Sadly, the most impressive thing about Armoured Fist is the box that it comes in, and after playing the game I'm convinced that Novalogic ought to dump the Voxel Space engine and try something completely different. The complex mathematical algorithms may well produce accurate 3D models and landscapes, but the engine is light years behind traditional polygon graphics in terms of aesthetics.

If you're a tank-nut, then by all means go out and buy Armoured Fist, because if you can ignore the graphics (and if you can, you're more tolerant than I am), it's a very solid and accurate game. However, if (a) you like to see where you're going and (b) you'd rather shoot at something that looks like a tank, rather than an blurry, blocky blob, then my advice is to wait a bit longer for MicroProse's impressive-looking 1944: Across The Rhine. I really thought that texture-mapped graphics couldn't get any worse than Origin's Pacific Strike. Boy, was I wrong.

ARMOURED FIST^{CD}

US GOLD/NOVALOGIC
(021) 625 3366
£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 1Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; Thrustmaster joystick; Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- An accurate simulation of modern tank warfare.
- The cutscenes are spectacular.

...AND THE BAD

- The Voxel-Space 3D graphics are bloody awful...
- ...In fact, they're so bad you can't see what the hell you're doing most of the time...
- ...And after about an hour, you can't be bothered anyway.

Overall

63%

Dawn Patrol

Dean Evans straps on his goggles and takes to the skies in Empire's flimsy flight sim.

When you first take a look at Dawn Patrol, it's very tempting to write the whole thing off as just "Overlord with slower planes". Both games were written by Rowan Software so it is, perhaps, inevitable that the 3D engines are practically identical and that their main feature is undoubtedly a very impressive Super VGA mode. And in common with Overlord, Dawn Patrol's ground detail is awful, the sound is little more than a hum and a cannon burst and, as if all this wasn't enough, the campaign mode is shallow and uninvolving.

Hmmm. It doesn't sound too hot so far, does it? But obviously, you can't pre-judge a game from a first look, and while Dawn Patrol does initially seem like an blatant excuse for Rowan to drag out its 3D engine again, Dawn Patrol neatly avoids a wholesale critical savaging by boldly proclaiming that it isn't actually a flight sim at all. No. Dawn Patrol, says the manual, is really an interactive book.

You see, Rowan has designed Dawn Patrol to be more of a flight game than a flight sim. And although the game has all the trappings of a First World War aerial simulation, after you've sat down and had a decent fiddle with it, you soon come to realise that with its wealth of historical information, pilot biographies and the hypertext links, Dawn Patrol isn't really a game at all — in fact, it feels a lot like a multimedia educational product.

Like a book, Dawn Patrol has over 100 pages devoted to all aspects of flying and fighting in the First World War. The book is divided into a number of individual sections, which include topics like The First Aces, Aircraft Of The Era and Pilot Biographies. When you choose one of these subjects, say, The First Aces, you are then presented with an abundance of historical info, illustrations and animations about the major heroes of the 1914-1918 war.

For example, the first pilot that the game mentions is the German ace, Oswald Boelcke. After you've read the background information about him, you can then click on the page and take on the role of Boelcke in a playable 3D mission. Basically, this is how Dawn Patrol is structured — you simply pick a subject, absorb the historical details and then, if you want to, you can take to the skies on a number of accurate missions to see if you can recreate history or rewrite it.

Of course, being a World War One fighter ace was supposed to be glamorous. Imagine the exhilaration of nose-to-tail dogfighting above the muddy, lice-filled trenches of France, the chatter of the machine guns, the wind in your hair... Ah, the romance of it all. Forget the bit about the three week life expectancy and the fact that the planes were little more than sheds powered by lawnmower engines — this was the dawn of air combat. This was dangerous stuff.

After you've overdosed on the history and the game has jumped into the 3D section, things become a tiny bit more traditional. Like the forthcoming Wings Of Glory from Origin, Dawn Patrol lets you take to the skies in a wide variety of flimsy World War One aircraft (the Spad, the SE5, the Fokker DR.1, etc) but, like the aforementioned Overlord, the feeling of simulated flying isn't actually very realistic or impressive.

Naturally, Dawn Patrol has a wealth of external views and floating camera angles, but as the cockpit layout takes up nearly half the screen, the actual playing area is relatively small. In fact, it's frustratingly restrictive, especially when you're used to the freedom of a virtual cockpit and being able to switch the cockpit off altogether. As much as I tried, I just couldn't shake the feeling that I was viewing the action through a slit, almost as if someone had secretly stuck a big Balaclava over my head when I wasn't looking.

And it's a great shame that you can't see more, because Dawn Patrol's SVGA graphics are absolutely gorgeous. Like Overlord, Rowan Software has developed a beautiful-looking game which can be played in either bog-standard VGA mode (quite nice) or high-resolution 640x480 SVGA mode (bloody fabulous). But you don't need me to tell you this — you can see for yourself that the aircraft are superbly defined and beautifully Gouraud-shaded, and the detail is so precise that you can even count the rivet holes and see the pilots sitting in the cockpits.

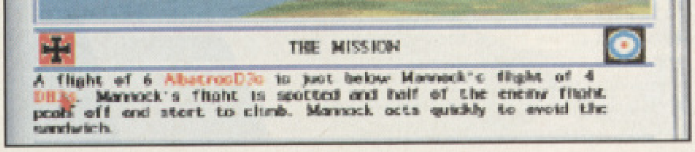
No, it's almost impossible to fault the graphics at all. In fact, the only problem that I encountered was some incompatibility between the more obscure SVGA cards and the drivers that are included with the game. Of course, Rowan have also included a universal VESA driver in case your card is not directly supported, so unless you own a machine nobody has heard of, with a graphics card that died in 1991, you shouldn't have any major worries.

But while Dawn Patrol makes an excellent educational or multimedia product (the CD-ROM version apparently uses digitised speech to narrate the historical bits), as a flight sim and as an exciting piece of entertainment, it isn't quite as successful.

Flight sim veterans will probably be disappointed with it, massively so, because the game doesn't concentrate on the flying but instead focuses more on the history of the war. You can play it as a straightforward flight game, of course, and ignore all the background detail, but even then the missions are short and unrewarding and the campaign mode, such as it is, is uninvolving and superficial.

Don't get me wrong — the combat part of the game isn't awful and the graphics are truly marvellous, but on the whole I can't help feeling that Dawn

Strictly speaking, Dawn Patrol isn't really a 'game', because the whole thing is based around a book. You simply pick a page, absorb all the accurate historical detail and then click on the iron cross to fly the mission. It's nicely structured but it's not stunningly exciting stuff.



The First Aces Tactician

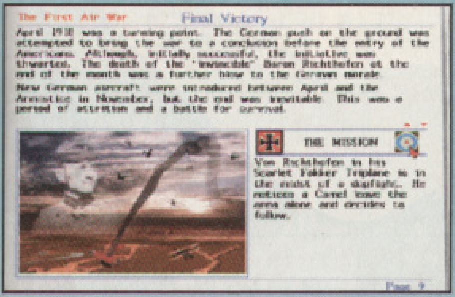
Mannock was the complete tactician. He knew what was going on around him at all times and knew how to deal with developing threats and how to turn the balance of odds to be in his own favour. In short, he had what we now know as situational awareness.

THE MISSION

A flight of 6 AlbatrosD3s to just below Mannock's flight of 4 DH5s. Mannock's flight is spotted and half of the enemy flight peels off and start to climb. Mannock acts quickly to avoid the sandwich.

External Locking

Unfortunately, one of the features Dawn Patrol doesn't have is a 'virtual' cockpit. Instead, Rowan has developed a versatile external lock which, if you hit the Return key, shows an external view of your current target and your aircraft in relation to it. While this lock isn't as realistic as the virtual cockpit in games like Wings Of Glory and TFX, it's still a very easy and effective way to spot your enemy. In fact, because the Dawn Patrol in-cockpit view is so restrictive, it's an absolute godsend.



The First Air War Final Victory

April 1918 was a turning point. The German push on the ground was attempted to bring the war to a conclusion before the entry of the Americans. Although, initially successful, the initiative was thwarted. The death of the 'invincible' Baron Richthofen at the end of the month was a further blow to the German morale.

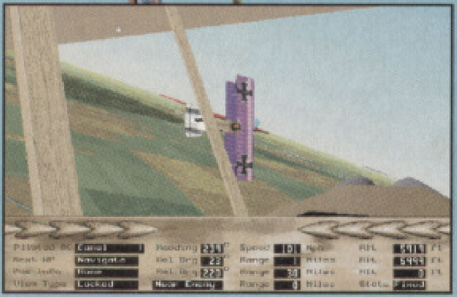
New German aircraft were introduced between April and the Armistice in November, but the end was inevitable. This was a period of attrition and a battle for survival.

THE MISSION

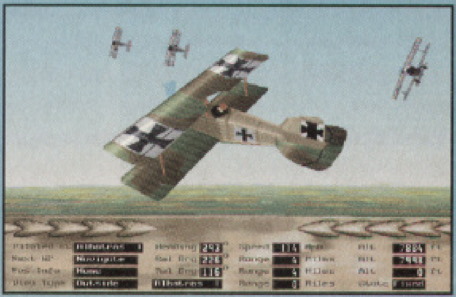
Von Richthofen in his Scarlet Fokker Triplane is in the midst of a dogfight. He notices a Camel leave the area alone and decides to follow.

Page 9

Before you fly a typical Dawn Patrol mission, you can read up on the key First World War moments, the aircraft and the Ace pilots, like Mannock and Baron Von Richthofen.



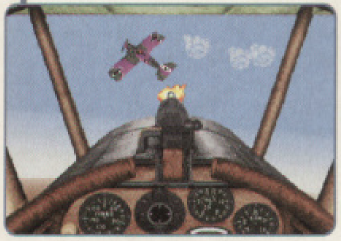
Once you've picked your mission, Dawn Patrol gives you the opportunity to fly the engagement as either a Luftwaffe or an Allied pilot, and you can also set the number of opponents.

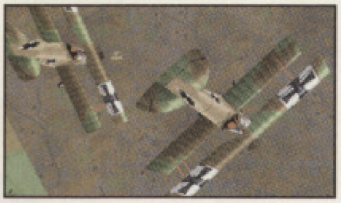


Once up in the air, it's typical flight sim fare and, using a very complex series of hotkeys, Dawn Patrol has an extensive range of pretty external views.

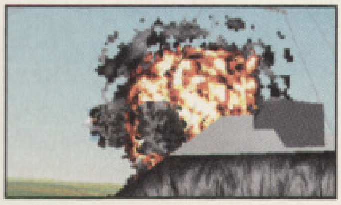
It's a bit like...

...Wings Of Glory, the imminent World War One flight sim from Origin. Just as Dawn Patrol drags out the Overlord 3D engine, so Wings Of Glory reuses the Strike Commander RealSpace engine and, like Wing Commander, blends cinematic talkie bits with an interactive campaign and intensive dogfighting. But is it any good? We'll have a full review next issue.

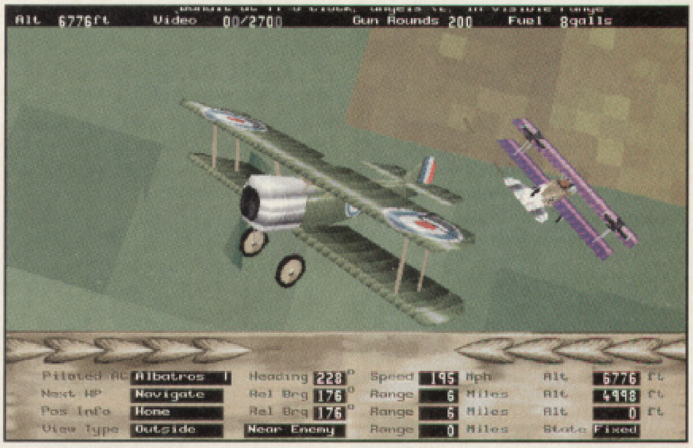




The planes are beautifully Gouraud-shaded in SVGA mode. Once you've played in high-res, you won't want to fly in VGA again.



Kerblam and Kaboom! Another SE5 bites the dust as the Germans go marching onwards.



Alt 6776ft Video 00/2700 Gun Rounds 200 Fuel 8galls

Piloted AC Albatros
Next WP Navigate
Pos Info Home
View Type Outside
Heading 228°
Rel Brg 176°
Rel Brg 176°
Near Enemy
Speed 195 Mph
Range 6 Miles
Range 6 Miles
Range 0 Miles
Alt 6776 ft
Alt 4998 ft
Alt 0 ft
State Fixed

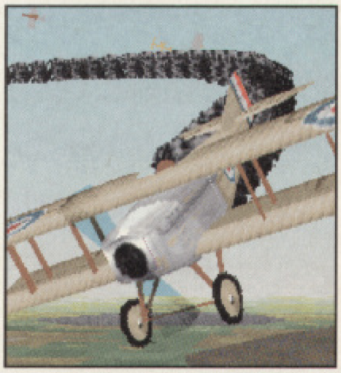
Strangely for a flight game, Dawn Patrol is totally uninspiring when you use the in-cockpit views, but absolutely awesome when you pick an external shot. The game engine is very versatile and allows you to rotate the view up and down in 360 degrees and to zoom in and out.

Patrol isn't half as playable and as enjoyable as Overlord. It's certainly very comprehensive — there are twenty different aircraft to fly, each of which has its own particular flying characteristics; accurate flight models; over 90 individual missions and, of course, the obligatory video editing facility — but unfortunately there's just not much of a 'game' underneath it all.

All in all, if you want a book about the First World War flying aces, a book that allows you to step in and fly historically-accurate missions with real-life pilots, then Dawn Patrol is definitely the product for you. As I've said, it would probably make a great edu-tainment multimedia title.

But if you'd like a little extra gameplay, a bit of a challenge and a campaign where you can test your flying skills to the limit, then I'm afraid you're going to have to wait a bit longer, because Dawn Patrol isn't it.

If you've already shelled out for Overlord, then you'll find Dawn Patrol *is* just more of the same. It's a nice product, but I'm afraid that it will probably interest you about as much as Dave's holiday snaps — enthusiasm for the first five minutes and then rampant boredom from then onwards.



The graphics in Dawn Patrol are absolutely wonderful – shame the game is a bit poor.

DAWN PATROL

EMPIRE INTERACTIVE/ROWAN

(081) 343 7337

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA/SVGA, 4Mb RAM and 20Mb of hard disk space.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Thrustmaster joystick; Sound Blaster, Roland and Ad Lib soundcards.

THE GOOD...

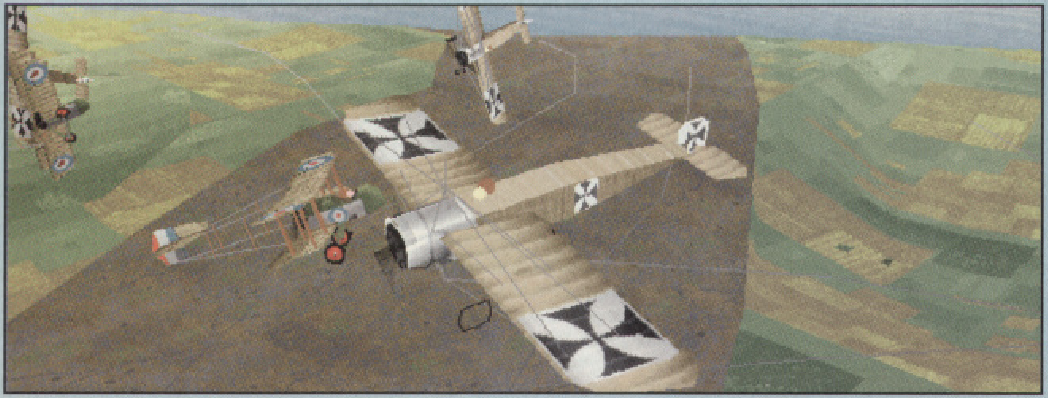
- It's an excellent interactive book.
- The SVGA graphics are stunning.
- Accurate flight models, 20 different aircraft and a wealth of historical detail.

...AND THE BAD

- An interactive book doesn't make a great game.
- It lacks continuity and involvement.
- The 3D engine is good, but the view is restricting and unrealistic.

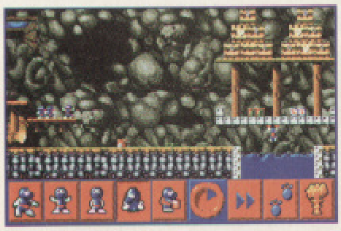
Overall

70%

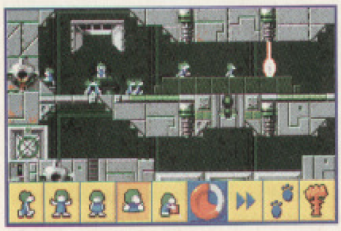


Those loveable Lemmings are back! They may be bigger and, er, puzzlier than ever before, but are they *better*? David Upchurch reveals all...

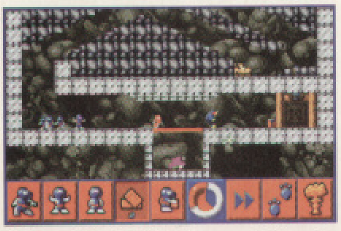
The All New World Of Lemmin



The 'Shimmier' tool gives your Lemmings special sucker pads, allowing them to stick to the undersides of platforms.



By turning on the 'Kid Mode', you can cut out the Lemmings' more gruesome death scenes, such as being zapped by a disintegrator.



Clicking with the RMB lets you cycle through the tools collected, and turns the Lemming carrying it a highly-visible shade of red.

All New World Of Lemmings is much more than just the third game in the perennially-popular Lemmings series. According to Psygnosis, it's also the first in a proposed four-part 'mini-series' — a bit like The Winds Of War, but starring green-haired, semi-intelligent rodents rather than a grey-haired, semi-intelligent Robert Mitchum.

As keepers of Lemmings lore will know, in Lemmings 2 the aim was to help the twelve Lemming 'tribes' escape the apocalypse about to engulf their island home. If ANWOL's intro is to be believed, somebody, somewhere, must have been successful, because the Lemmings are now floating high above the sea in an ark carried by hot-air balloon, searching for a new home.

Just as the food begins to run out and things are starting to look a tad desperate, one of the Lemmings spots an archipelago of twelve islands in the distance which, rather conveniently, will provide a perfect home for each of the Tribes. ANWOL starts just after the first three Tribes — Classic, Egyptian and Shadow — have been dropped off (the following parts will centre around the adventures of the remaining nine tribes).

Of course, the three Tribes are keen to explore their new homes, each of which consists of thirty levels of traps and perils. As always, it's the player's job to protect the Lemmings from their own suicidal tendencies and ensure that as many Lemmings as possible make it to the level's exit.

If this brief description makes ANWOL sound like every other Lemmings game, well, that's because it *is* like every other Lemmings game. However, the game actually differs in several key respects, all of which conspire to make ANWOL a totally fresh and very enjoyable gaming experience.

So what's new? Well, the most obvious difference — and the one most likely to upset long-time Lemmings fans — is that the little darlings themselves are bigger (or rather, as the manual goes to great pains to point out, they just *look* bigger because this time you've got a closer view of the action).

I must admit that the thought of bigger Lemmings did worry me a little, but in practice it actually works quite well. True, the all-important 'cuteness factor' that made the original games so appealing has been diminished *slightly*, but this is easily outweighed by the fact that all the graphics benefit greatly from the increased level of detail.

And there's more. Provided your machine has Super VGA graphics capability, you can even opt to have the menu and map screens rendered in glorious high-res. Okay, so the in-game graphics remain stuck in chunky ol' VGA but what do you want — blood? (And while we're on the subject of graphics, I have to say that I think the ray-traced Lemmings used in the intro were a *big* mistake.)

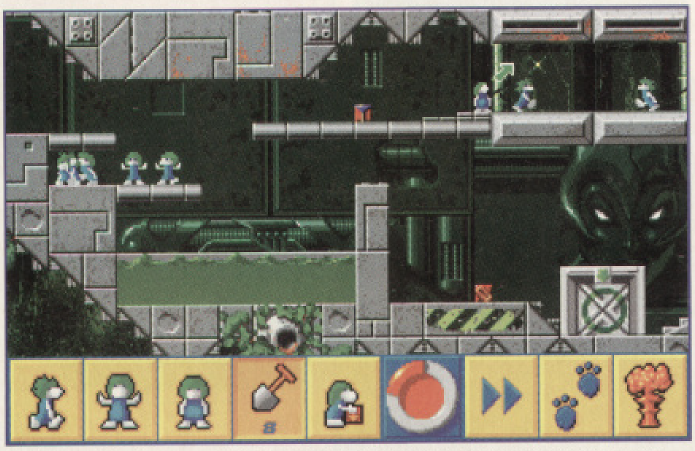
The gameplay has been altered too. You no longer have a menu of 'skill' icons. Instead, there are just five 'action' icons: Walk (changes walking direction and 'frees' Blockers), Block (stops other Lemmings), Jump (makes the targeted Lemming, er, jump), Use (makes a Lemming use any tools it's picked up) and Drop (makes a Lemming drop a tool).

Eh? Whassat? Tools? Tools are like the old skills, and in All New World Of Lemmings these tools are 'collected' by the Lemmings as they wander through each level. The tools are shown as tiny red boxes, and if a Lemming encounters one he'll pick it up, assuming he isn't carrying a tool already. The ten types of tools vary from bridging blocks and spades (for digging tunnels) to bombs and suckers (for climbing sheer surfaces), and each can only be used a limited number of times.

Success, then, lies in knowing how and when to use the tools available. At first, the use of tools makes no apparent difference to the gameplay. Later on, however, when you have to start dropping tools, swapping them with other Lemmings and so on, the game develops an addictive flavour all of its own. Yes, all this tools business does make the gameplay a little 'fussier' than before, but not so much so that it becomes annoying.

The new 'Jump' ability also makes the gameplay slightly more arcade-y than before. On some levels you have to jump across pits to reach certain targets, and this often requires precise, split-second timing. It's on such levels that you realise the advantages of the larger Lemmings — with the old, smaller rodents such antics would've been nightmarishly difficult to get right.

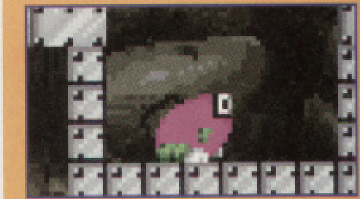
DMA Design have taken quite a big risk making such fundamental changes to the Lemmings formula, so all credit to them for pulling it off admirably. While All New World Of Lemmings still feels like a part of the Lemmings saga, it's different enough to make it appealing to even the most jaded veteran Lemming-saver. I can't wait for All New World Of Lemmings Part II...



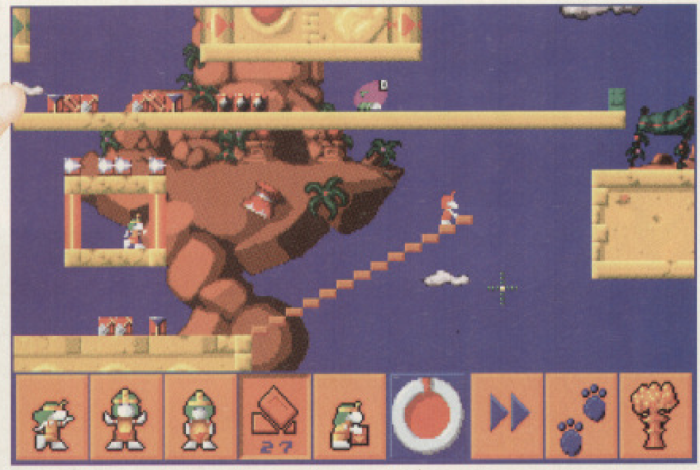
Each Tribe starts the game with just ten Lemmings. If, say, only seven survive Level 1, then you'll start Level 2 with seven Lemmings. However, a few Lemmings have got lost in some of the levels and, if rescued, they'll become a part of your tribe.

Creature *Feature!*

As if bottomless pits, acid pools and disintegrator beams weren't enough, the poor little Lemmings now have to contend with wandering monsters. Hmmm, sounds like the cue for a panel...



The Potato Beast is so-named because of its startling resemblance to a potato — well, a purple potato, anyway. A particularly vicious creature, it'll home in on and eat any Lemmings in the vicinity.

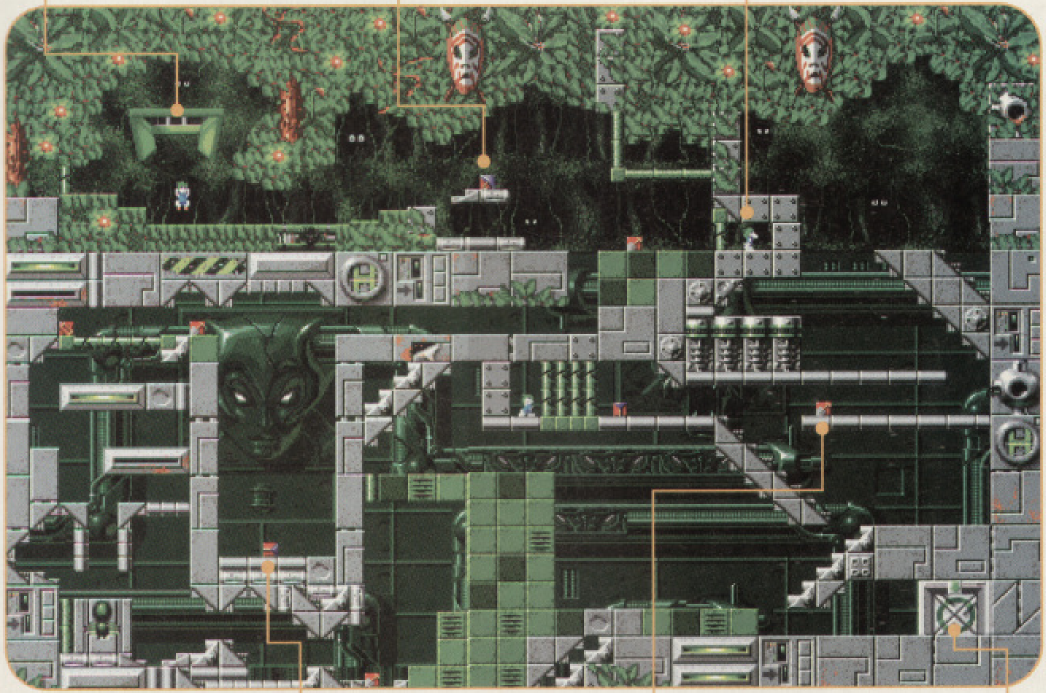


(Right) ANWOL has a special Replay feature. When kicked in, it re-runs the level exactly as you played it, and you can step in at any point and take over. It's very handy when you're trying to solve a tricky level, but you can't complete the game using it.

The familiar trapdoor entrance to the level — the number of Lemmings that start a level is the same as the number of Lemmings that survived the last one.

The Umbrella tool allows the Lemmings to fall an almost infinite distance without taking any damage. You can probably see where it's needed...

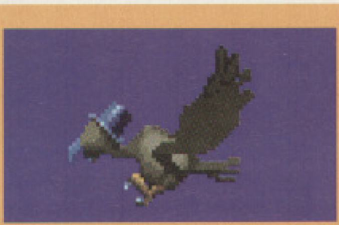
Some levels contain 'bonus' Lemmings that you can attempt to rescue — these, supposedly, are Lemmings who jumped out of the ark too early.



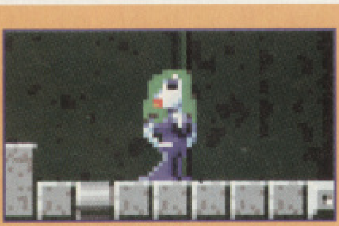
The 'Sucker' tool lets Lemmings climb up sheer wall faces. Each tool 'pack' only contains a limited number of suckers, so use them wisely.

The 'Spade' tool is handy for digging through walls and flooring. When used, an arrow appears next to the Lemming, allowing you to direct where they dig.

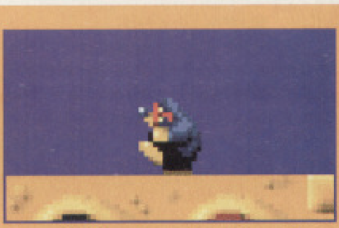
The exit to the level. All Lemmings must be rescued, even the 'bonus' ones, to complete the game properly. This, let me tell you, is not easy.



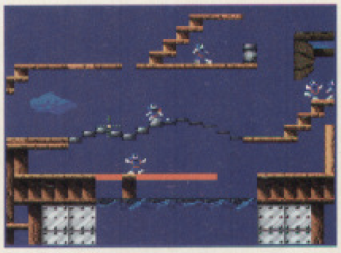
Apparently the Psycho Buzzard, the terror of the skies, has only recently acquired the ability to fly — and is none too pleased about it. Well, to be fair, all that flapping about would annoy anybody.



The Lemme Fatale is a highly-evolved mimic which has the siren-like ability to hypnotise Lemmings and lure them to their doom. Luckily, distracting the smitten Lemming with a task will snap them out of it.



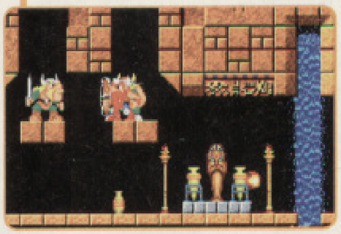
The mole is the only creature the Lemmings meet that isn't interested in having them for lunch. In fact, the mole can be quite useful — by building walls in its path, you can force it to dig tunnels for you!



ANWOL has several landscape features that you might expect to find in a platform game, such as crumbly ledges that disappear under the Lemmings' feet.

It's a bit like...

Ah-ha! You thought I was going to take the easy way out and say Lemmings or Lemming 2: The Tribes, didn't you? Well, I'm not — because what ANWOL reminds me of more than anything, with its 'tool-based' gameplay and arcade elements, is Interplay's The Lost Vikings. But while The Lost Vikings is nice enough in its own way, ANWOL offers more fun and longevity overall.



ALL NEW WORLD OF LEMMINGS

PSYGNOSIS/DMA DESIGN

(051) 709 5755

£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

16MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM, 7Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

SVGA; Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- As infuriatingly addictive as ever.
- The graphics are very nice, especially the larger Lemmings and improved backgrounds.
- Some refreshing twists on the old Lemmings formula.

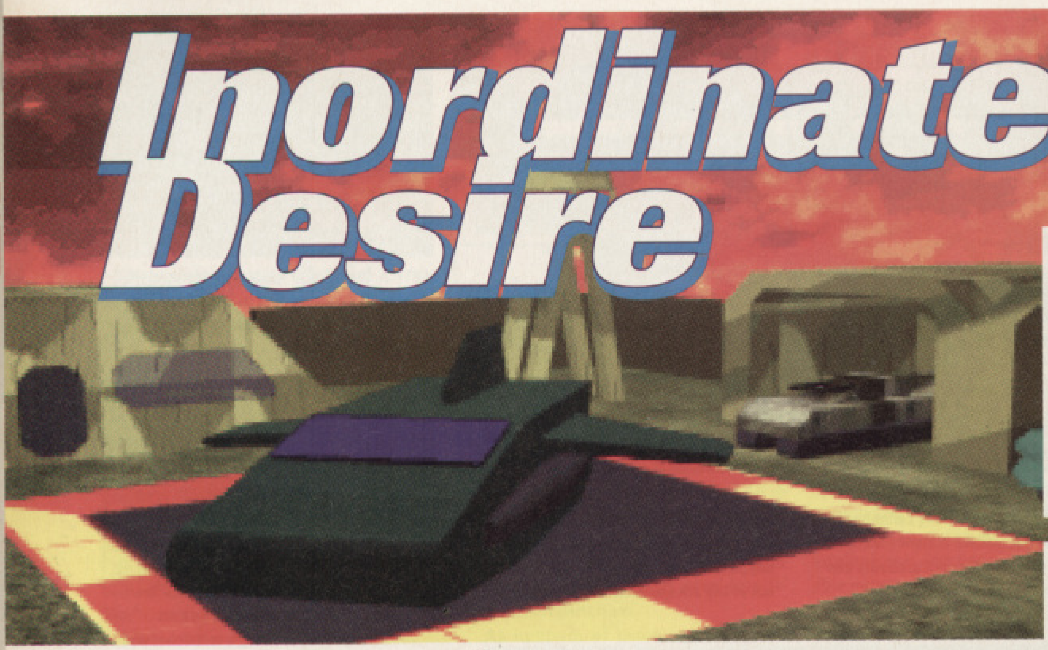
...AND THE BAD

- As with every Lemmings game, some of the levels are very frustrating.
- The arcade-y aspects might turn some gamers off.

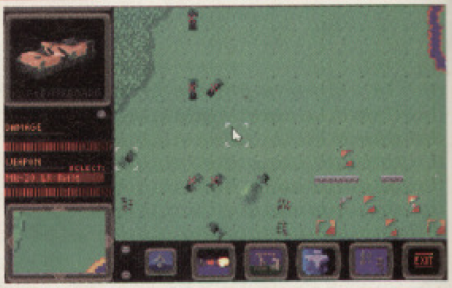
Overall

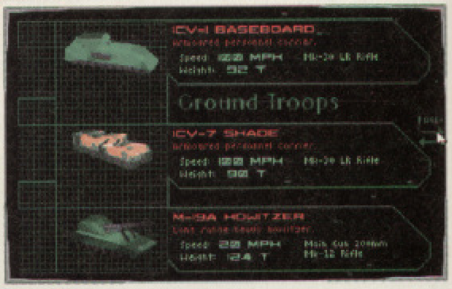
88%

Inordinate Desire

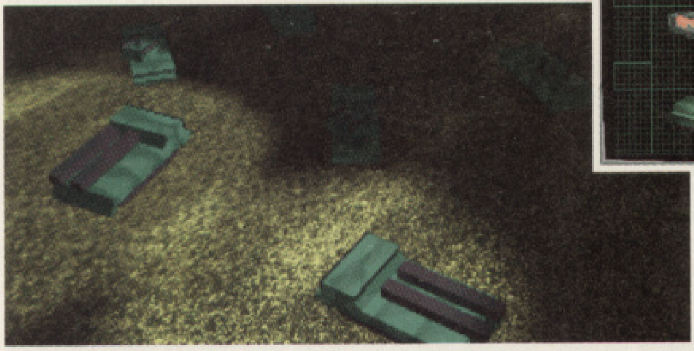


Alex Fraser commands a whole space carrier in Black Legend's tale of interstellar war.





(Above) You've got to choose your equipment carefully , because you're working to a tight financial budget. And, yes, it's *very* Battle Isle II, don't you think?



All right, so I wrote off a space carrier in my first campaign. It wasn't my fault. Nobody reminded me to send out the patrol fighters and, besides, the ground forces weren't doing very well anyway.

You'd have thought I'd have done better. I don't want to blow my own trumpet, but I'm a bit nifty on Wing Commander Armada and, if I do say so myself, I'm no slouch at Battle Isle II either. And since those two are the main ingredients in the gaming cocktail that calls itself Inordinate Desire, I should've been wise to little things like air cover (space cover?) for my vessel.

Still, you live and learn. In fact, I was really looking forward to my second stab at this little game. It's well presented, with lovely music, decent sound effects, and thoroughly acceptable graphics too... unless you count the space combat bits, but I'll come to those in a moment.

The idea behind the game is that you've been sent out in your space carrier to fly missions against a particularly nefarious enemy, many planets away from High Command and the Earth. With limited supplies of the latest military hardware and not much cash to buy replacements, you have to coordinate not only carrier activities and space attacks, but also plan each day for the marines that go into the front line.

The carrier section of the game is more or less concerned with the logistics of the military operation, and the fighters and bombers on-board. You have to set up those patrols that I merrily forgot about, check that any repairs are going according to plan, activate the vehicles in the hanger for their various jobs, and order a freighter to deliver any equipment that you reckon you might need to complete you mission (as long as it's within budget). There's not really much more to it, apart from making sure your fighters are patrolling the area!

When any of the fighters encounter the enemy, you are thrust into the cockpit and asked to shoot them down in person. Sadly, this is less fun than it sounds, because the graphics are poor and the controls are frustratingly unresponsive. Inordinate Desire is neither Wing Commander nor Tie Fighter in this respect. If truth be told, I was left dreading the moment my craft ever detected the enemy, which isn't a good sign. In MicroProse's Starlord, the ship control method made space combat equally uninviting, but at least you could turn it off. Not so here, I'm afraid.

As for the ground assault, each day you must shuttle down to the planet's surface to give units their orders for that day. It's very similar to Battle Isle II, but nowhere near as in-depth – units move, fire, or perform a very limited number of other actions, and although it makes for a playable game, it's not one that has any lasting appeal.

In fact, this really sums up my feelings about the whole game. I returned for a second bash, and found myself coasting through, stupid mistakes apart. I was glad to be charging through, because I was waiting for the next surprise or thrill. But all I got was more of the same. There weren't any fun plot-twists or great changes of scene. Yes, things got a bit tougher, but nowhere near enough to stop someone with a bit of brain power, even if they hadn't experienced any of the other similar games around.

Inordinate Desire tries hard to bridge different sci-fi game genres, hoping that if you like one type of game for its tactical side, then you'll like different types — hence the mix of the Battle Isle and Wing Commander-style gameplay. Unfortunately, both sections really should be of the same high standards as either competing game on its own. Otherwise, as is the case with Inordinate Desire, it'll be destined for a quick trip to budget-gamesville. Which is a shame, because (combat aside) it's not a badly put-together game.

However, all the presentation in the world can't hide wafer-thin gameplay for very long. It might be a game that's suited to strategy game beginners, but if you relish any sort of challenge, it's really far too basic for that too. All in all, Inordinate Desire is neither great nor downright awful, it's in a horrible limbo somewhere in-between.

INORDINATE DESIRE

VIRTUAL ARTS/ BLACK LEGEND

(0438) 840004

£29.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM, 11 Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Gravis UltraSound soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- It's graphically pleasing.
- The sound's really good too.
- It's based on some good games.

...AND THE BAD

- The tactical gameplay isn't anywhere near as good as Battle Isle II's.
- The in-cockpit space bits are pretty grim, really.
- Not really much of a challenge after a while.

Overall

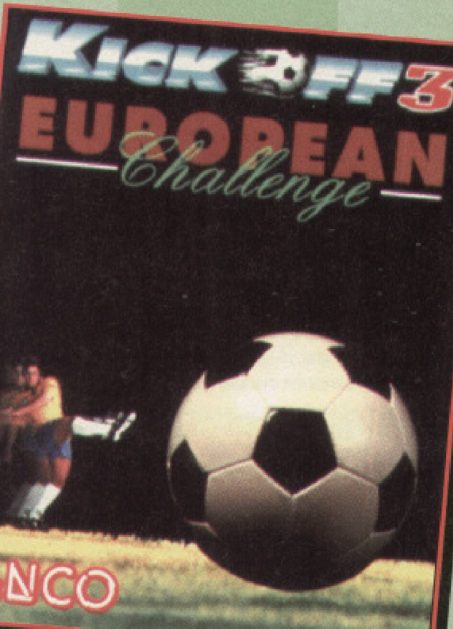
54%

KICK OFF 3
EUROPEAN
Challenge

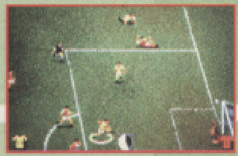
AMIGA 500/500+/600 £24.99
AMIGA 1200/IBM PC £29.99
CD32/PC CD ROM £34.99

It's Kickin'!

The top 24 International Teams and the best 96 Euro Club sides battle it out in Kick Off 3 European Challenge. Build your side around the star men. It is these key players who provide the skill and the style needed to win one of the 12 League and cup trophies, and maybe even the World Cup itself!



Looks Good...



Superb animation giving fast flowing soccer action. Bit-mapped International class pitches. 1500 detailed sprites bring the game to life with referees, linesmen, trainers and much more.

Sounds Good...

Nearly 1 MB of sound. Digitised crowd noise samples and chants lets you soak up the big match atmosphere.

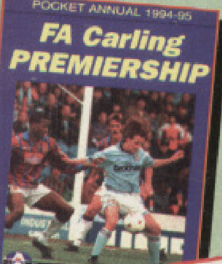
Plays Good...

Master the moves and you'll master the game. 16 individual player actions at your fingertips. With powerful runs by the full backs, penetrating passes from the playmakers and devastating wing play... this is a game with blistering pace and instinctive appeal.

Features...

- **40 Set plays for dead ball situations.**
- **Practice mode, team talk and match facts.**
- **Edit player names. Play alongside the top International stars.**
- **Save your best strikes and get ready for the Golden Goals competitions.**
- **Skill Speed and ball control options help you progress to the very top.**
- **Ease of control with 4 button joypad (optional).**

Is Good... And Gives You More!



Worth £3.99

The first 10,000 Amiga copies and the first 10,000 PC copies of Kick Off 3 European Challenge come with a FREE FA Carling Premiership Pocket Annual 1994-95. Worth £3.99 with a complete Premiership club directory, season reviews, player records - this is a guide that no soccer fan should be without!

ANCO

© 1994 Anco Games Anco Software Ltd, 7 Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH
Tel: 0322 292513 Fax: 0322 293422 Amiga: Min 1 Mb, 1 button, 2 button and CD32 joypad compatible
IBM PC: Min 386/33 MHZ VGA 2 button or Gravis joypad compatible. Soundblaster compatible.
* Screen shots displayed are representative of IBM PC and Amiga 1200 versions only.

Cyberwar CD

Cyberjobe returns once more but Cyber Dean Evans is ready for him in SCI's sequel to the very pretty Lawnmower Man.

Although not strictly a sequel, SCI's new game Cyberwar is the next instalment in the Lawnmower Man saga. Like the original Lawnmower Man game, which neatly dispensed with much of the film's plot and instead took the player on a trip into Hollywood-style VR landscapes, Cyberwar has the same impressive-looking graphics, a variety of difficult puzzles to solve and a funky, futuristic soundtrack. Oh, and like The Lawnmower Man game, it doesn't have much in the way of gameplay either.

But I'll get to the lack of gameplay later. If you're not familiar with The Lawnmower Man film, it told the story of Dr Angelo (a computer scientist) who gives Jobe (a slightly retarded gardener) a massive brain boost with some high-tech Virtual Reality equipment. Unfortunately, like poor Victor Frankenstein, Dr Angelo has no idea of what he's creating and Jobe eventually becomes a superhuman figure, invading the world's computer networks and effectively taking control of the planet.

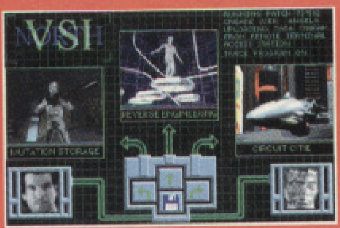
In Cyberwar, you again take on the role of Dr Angelo (the chap played by Pearce Brosnan in the original Lawnmower Man movie), and you must pit your wits against Cyberjobe, the virtual Cybergod operating from within the Cybercomplex of the VSI Corporation mainframe computer. Your mission is to single-handedly fight your way through the military defence network and to locate and then destroy the Omega chip which is the very heart of Cyberjobe's virtual city.

Like The Lawnmower Man, SCI's original movie licence, Cyberwar *looks* and *sounds* absolutely fabulous. It has an original soundtrack, features some stunning, 256-colour, ray-traced graphics, ten different game types and even full-colour footage from the original Lawnmower Man movie. But when you scrape away the glossy veneer, you discover that Cyberwar is really little more than a Crystal Maze derivative with

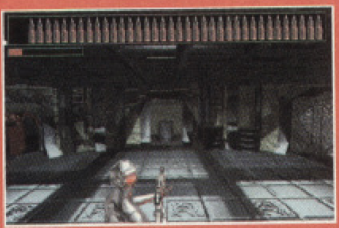
Cyberwar uses some great ray-traced graphics to illustrate the monsters like Bernie (right) and Cyberjobe's Cyberhell (below). Sadly, though, there's not much of a game underneath.

Hello? *Gameplay?* Hello?

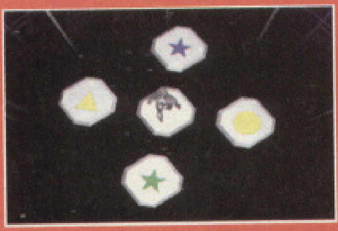
As your fight towards Cyberjobe begins, you log onto a computer terminal and are given three different games to try.



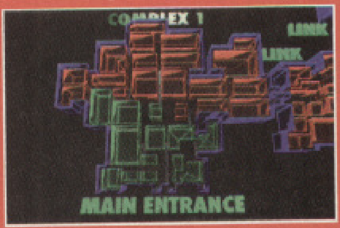
By far the easiest game in Cyberwar is Mutation Storage, which involves shooting Bernie when he appears in a doorway.

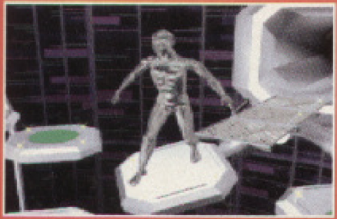


Reverse Engineering is another easy game. Here you've got to discover the links between the symbols in order to cross the chasm.

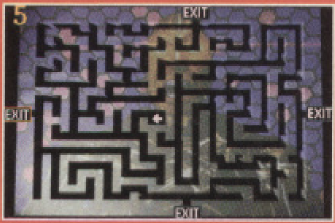


When you complete a game, a room turns from red to green on the main map. Turn all the rooms to green to reach the next level.

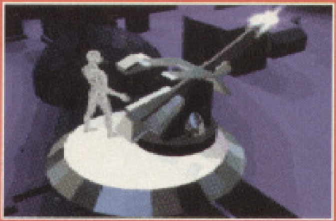




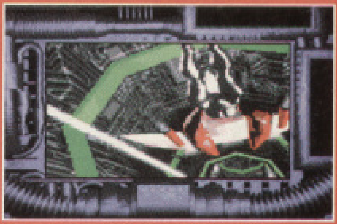
Every time you make a move in Cyberwar, your actions are displayed in a very attractive cinematic cutscene.



In one of the Security Door games, you have ten seconds to find out which exit the arrow leads to. Easy — it's the one on the left!



Projectile Ranges is a fancy version of the old tanks game. Pick a trajectory and try to shoot your opponent before he gets you.



Cyberboogie involves guiding a Cyberplane down a long tunnel, dodging barriers and, er, that's pretty much it.

some funky music and fancy cutscenes.

Yes, The Crystal Maze. If you've ever watched it on the television or, more importantly, if you've ever played the coin-op version in the pub, you'll realise that the gameplay in Cyberwar is almost exactly the same. Okay, so there aren't any crystals to collect but, like The Crystal Maze, the gameplay revolves around nipping into different rooms to solve different sub-games that require both a bit of brain-power and some perfect hand-eye coordination.

In Cyberwar, these sub-games are all accessed from a network of computer terminals dotted around the corridors of the VSI complex. Whereas in The Crystal Maze you can pick either a Physical, a Skill, a Mental or a Mystery game, at each terminal in Cyberwar you are presented with three different game choices, say, for example, Cyberboogie, Reverse Engineering and Security Door. To move onto the next section of the game, you've got to play and complete all of these sub-games at least twice.

These sub-games are a mix of simple logic puzzles and frustratingly annoying arcade sequences. For example, the oddly named Cyberboogie (a popular feature of the original game) involves guiding a Cyberplane down a tunnel, using the cursor keys to negotiate the corners and to dodge metallic walls that rise out of the floor to block your path.

Reverse Engineering, on the other hand, is a straightforward puzzle that involves jumping across a chasm using a number of floating platforms. All of these platforms have different symbols on them (i.e. a green square, a red star, a blue triangle, etc) and the idea is simply to work out which platform you can safely step onto next.

If you begin on a platform that has a green square, for example, you can only move to an adjacent platform that has either a square or a green symbol on it. So, if you move to a green star, you can then only move onto a platform with either a star or a green symbol on it, etc.

Lastly, the Security Door sub-game throws up a variety of brain-teasers that include simple find-the-exit maze games, jigsaw puzzles and a problem involving six linked cogs that must either be turned anticlockwise or clockwise to complete the puzzle. All of the puzzles in the Security Door sub-game also have a ten-second time limit, so you've got to work out the answer to the puzzle quickly or die in the attempt.

If you hadn't realised by now, the gameplay in Cyberwar (in fact, I don't know if you can even really call it 'gameplay') is very simplistic and shallow. Like Space Ace or Dragon's Lair, the graphics are very good but the gameplay is virtually non-existent. All you seem to get with Cyberwar is two second snippets of interactivity (i.e. pressing a key) and lots of passive viewing. You never feel that you're involved in the game and 'interactivity' boils down to deciding which of the four cursor keys you're going to have to press next.

I mean, let's say you've picked the Cyberboogie game. You've sat back and watched your virtual self walk through the huge yellow door, and as your Cyberplane thunders down the tunnel, the view cuts rapidly between a first-person perspective view and various cinematic external views.

The tunnel turns left, so you hit the 'left' key. Two or three seconds of non-interactive Silicon Graphics footage follows. Then the tunnel turns sharply upwards, so you hit the 'up' key. Cue more pretty footage. A barrier with a hole in its left-hand side rises out of the floor. You hit the 'left' key again to slip through it. Another barrier appears, this time with the hole on the right, so you hit the 'right' key. You do all this another nine or ten times and, if you manage to dodge all the barriers, you land safely at the other end. But, if you crash, you're on a one-way trip to Cyberhell.

Is this gameplay? I've had more fun fiddling with a biro. I checked the box to see if the gameplay was hidden under the free T-shirt, and I even looked on the floor to see if it had fallen out when I wasn't looking. But no — sadly, it seems that SCI has just forgotten to put any in. Cyberwar is just a movie that you can tinker with using the cursor keys.

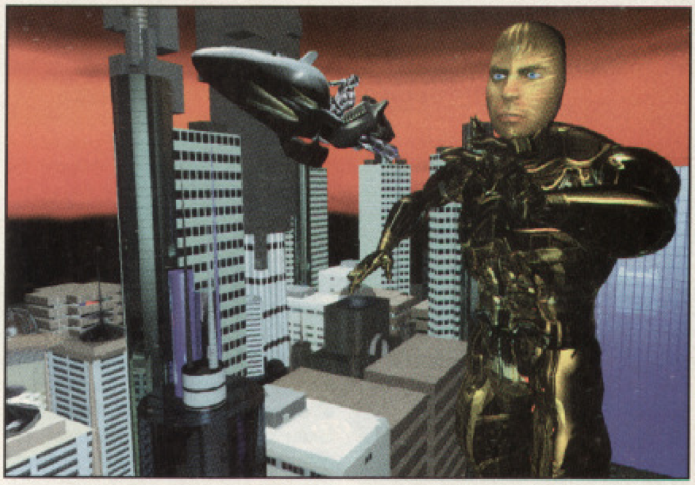
Games should challenge you constantly, not chuck non-interactive footage at you that can only be manipulated every few minutes or so. While Cyberwar looks nice, like Dragon's Lair its interactivity is a myth. To its credit, in games like Cyberboogie and Circuit Citie, the pre-rendered footage is jumbled up so the courses are different, but this still doesn't make Cyberwar any more exciting or indeed fun to play.

Cyberwar is a huge game and comes on three CDs (you also get the soundtrack on a fourth), but even so I do have doubts about the variety and longevity of the gameplay. Big doubts. Huge, bloody-great mountain-sized doubts, in fact. I can't see how a couple of keyboard taps can hold anybody's interest and, yes, while I admit that it looks nice and that the music is very good, the gameplay really sucks.

At almost £50, think long and hard before you buy Cyberwar. It's frustrating to play, repetitive and very dull. If you want to sit back and watch something, go out and rent a video. But if you want to play a game, something that will challenge your gaming skills as well as your grey matter, then pick something like Ecstatica or Little Big Adventure. Pick anything. Just don't buy Cyberwar. Come on, just how blatant do you want me to be?

It's a bit like...

...Dragon's Lair. Dragon's Lair on CD-ROM is a faithful conversion of the ancient coin-op, in that it has beautiful cartoon graphics but absolutely no gameplay whatsoever. You just progress through the various scenes, pressing left, right, up, down or fire at the appropriate moment, to progress. Call this gameplay?



Cyberjobe lords over his virtual city. It's hard to imagine that this virtual Cybergod used to be a simple gardener. Perhaps he knows where the gameplay is. Hey, excuse me...

CYBERWAR CD

SALES CURVE INT./IN-HOUSE

(071) 585 3308

£49.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 1Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; gamepad; Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Pro Audio Spectrum soundcards.

THE GOOD...

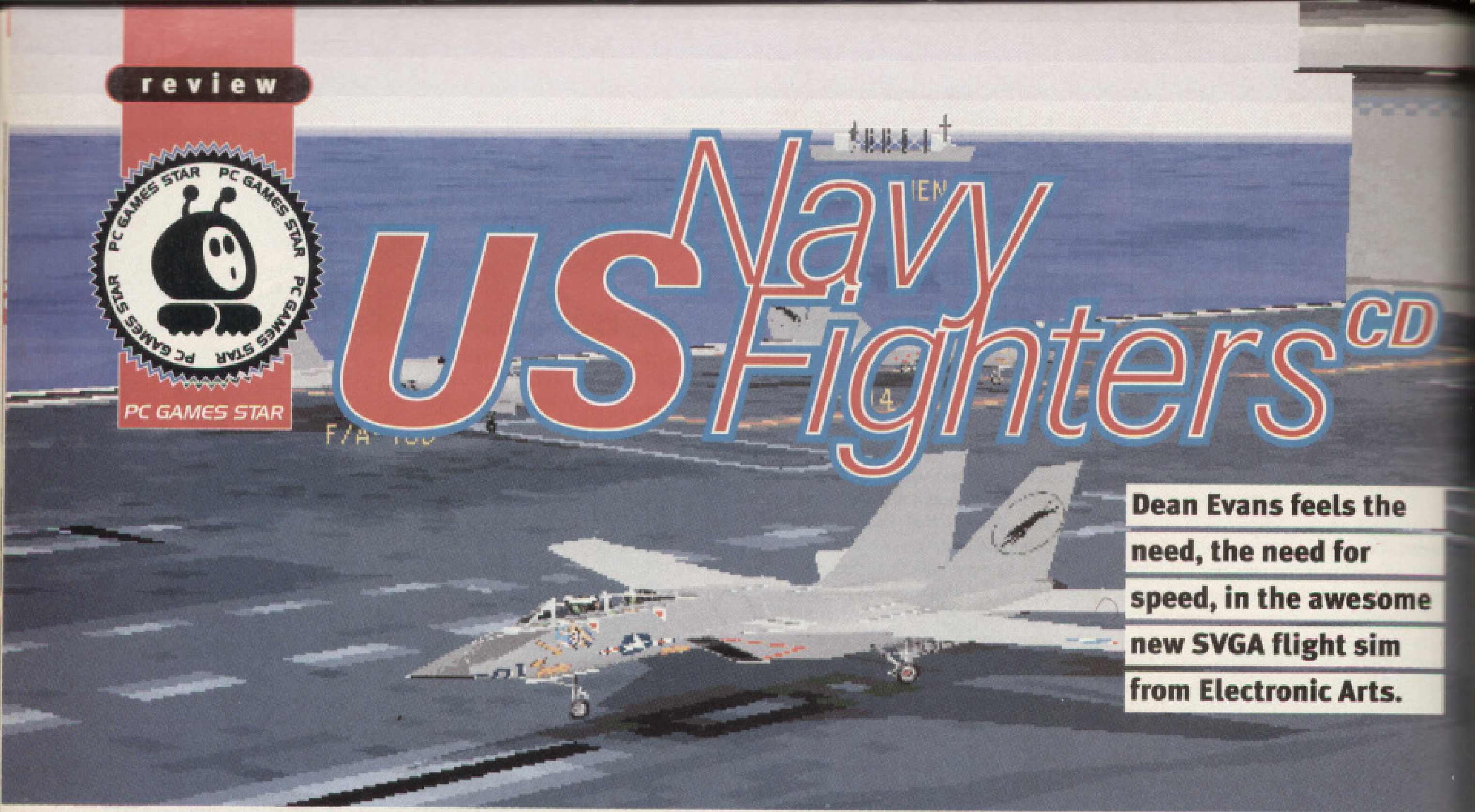
- The graphics are impressive...
- ... And so is the soundtrack.

...AND THE BAD

- Play it for ten minutes and it becomes repetitive and dull.
- There's absolutely no challenging gameplay in Cyberwar at all.
- None.
- Not even a smidgeon.

Overall

37%



PC GAMES STAR

US Navy Fighters CD

Dean Evans feels the need, the need for speed, in the awesome new SVGA flight sim from Electronic Arts.

Oh dear. Another flight sim. I suppose it's got the usual mix of high-tech aircraft, some external camera views – fully rotatable, of course – single and campaign mission options, a virtual cockpit thingie, stereo sound that's so real you'll think that you're really there, and the sort of polygon-based 3D engine that yanks your trousers down and makes your eyeballs pop humorously out of their sockets. Oh, and probably some Full-Motion Video bits as well.

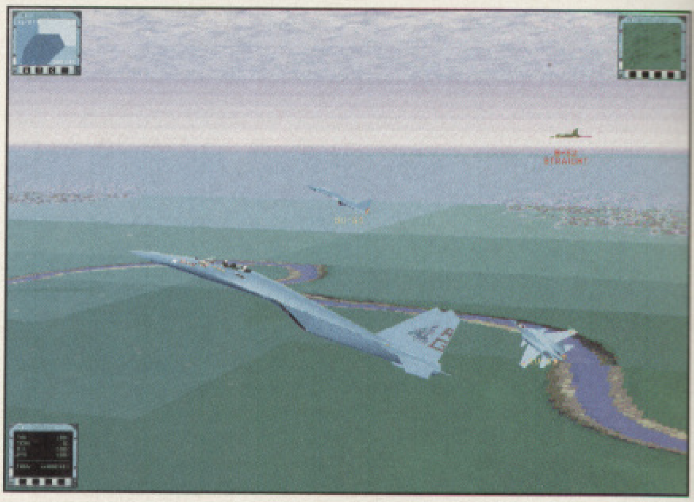
Yes, yes, you might well be saying, there's nothing new is there? Well, I must admit that no, there isn't. In essence, US Navy Fighters from Electronic Arts is just another carrier-based flight sim. It doesn't boast any more gameplay than any other modern jet-based game but – and this is a big, 72-point Sans Serif sort of 'but' – you only have to look at any of the jaw-droppingly beautiful screenshots on these pages to realise that US Navy Fighters is 'Next Generation' stuff.

The major thing that sets USNF apart from, say, Fleet Defender is the simple fact that you can play it in Super VGA. As you can see, the game looks bloody gorgeous. The planes are smoothly constructed and shaded, with all the necessary markings and paintwork. In fact, they're so good in the high-resolution modes that you can hardly see the edges, and one look at the aircraft carrier Eisenhower is enough to take your breath away. I'm afraid that US Navy Fighters makes Overlord and Dawn Patrol seem positively blocky in comparison.

Obviously, with graphics as good as this, you're going to need a cheetah-speed PC – something like a 90MHz Pentium – to run the game at maximum detail in 640x480 SVGA. But if you're not blessed with the joys of 64-bit processing power, USNF can be played in a variety of graphics resolutions: 320x200, 320x400, 640x480, 800x600 and even, hold on to your socks, a massive 1024x768. Of course, all these resolutions also have adjustable detail levels, which allow you to turn the shading and the textures on or off to suit the speed of your particular machine.

In fact, the versatility of USNF is very impressive – almost anything can be changed. Designed by the people who created the very playable Chuck Yeager's Air Combat, US Navy Fighters is the first game in a proposed Air Combat series. Having developed an excellent 3D engine, the team has deliberately set out to include all the major features of the modern flight sim, but to make it bigger, better and much more realistic.

Being a carrier-based flight sim, US Navy Fighters lets you fly front-line US combat aircraft, including the F-14 Tomcat, the F/A-18 Hornet and the naval version of the F-22 Lightning. And, if all that wasn't enough, there's the Navy F-104 Starfighter to get to grips with and even (no doubt thanks to the 90s' new era of international cooperation) the super-sleek, sky-blue Russian SU-33 Flanker.



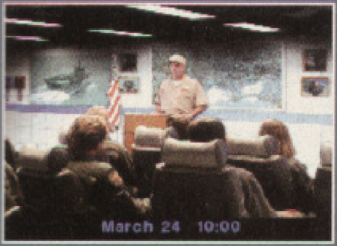
Because one of the Navy pilots is a Russian exchange student, you can also strut your aerial stuff in the beautifully sleek SU-33 Flanker. Just look at those graphics...

You can choose to fly either a single mission, a fifty-mission campaign or, if you've exhausted all the preset possibilities, you can also sit down and create your own. Anything can be altered – you can pick the plane you fly, the number of wingmen you fly with and the time of day you attack. Then you can select how many aircraft you want to fly against, what type of plane they will be (AV8B Assault Harriers, B-52s, A-10 Tankbusters, etc), the nature of the ground target (a bridge, power station, enemy shipping) and whether the target is defended by AA guns and/or SAM missile batteries.

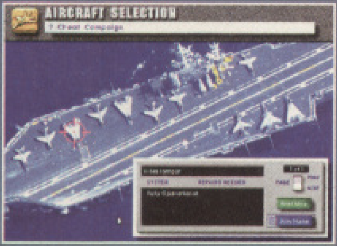
But there's no such messing about in the campaign option, which places the player on board the American aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower. Using crisp, very impressive FMV sequences for the briefings, you discover that radical nationalist forces in Russia have ousted the vodka-master, Boris Yeltsin, and are now leading a crusade to absorb ethnically Russian areas in the neighbouring republics.

Fortunately, the United States has agreed to protect the Ukraine, a recent ally in the region, and the Eisenhower is deployed to the Black Sea. What follows are over fifty increasingly difficult missions, sorties that test your multi-role skills to the limit and include combat air patrols, escort missions, anti-ship strikes and close air support. All tightly bound together by the FMV clips, the Black Sea campaign is probably the

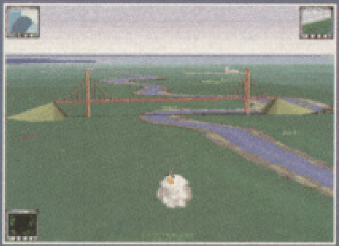
That Top Gun *Feeling...*



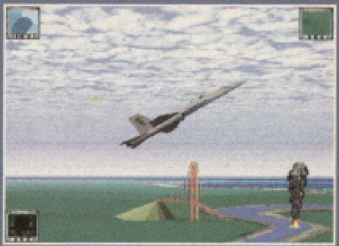
The Black Sea campaign begins with a very impressive FMV briefing sequence.



Next, you can choose what aircraft you want to fly – F-14 Tomcat or F/A-18 Hornet?



Apparently I've got to waste this bridge, so with Mavericks armed, it's missiles away!!!



Success. The bridge collapses and explodes in a fireball, and I return to the Eisenhower.

most atmospheric and exciting battle I've fought for some time — in fact, this is what I imagined flying a modern aircraft would be like.

Realism seems to have been at the very top of the design agenda at EA, and the attention to detail in USNF is truly stunning. As you fly the various missions you can hear radio traffic from your wingmen, chatter from radar intercept officers, and reports from the AWACs early-warning aircraft as they update you on the ever-changing combat situation.

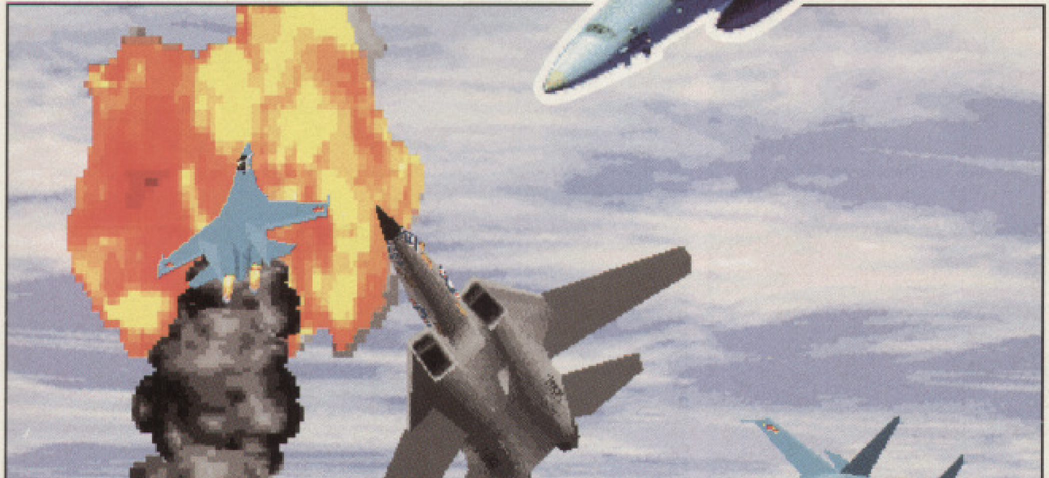
As you can no doubt see for yourself, all of the aircraft, ships and vehicles are fully texture-mapped and, if you've got 8Mb of RAM, USNF also uses bitmapped animations to create a variety of special effects, including catapult officers directing aircraft on the carrier deck, digitised explosions and dramatic ejection sequences. And while the ground isn't the most exciting you'll have come across, USNF goes texture-map crazy, shading the water, sky, coastlines, roads, bridges and even the trees.

There's a virtual cockpit and all the expected external views, of course, and US Navy Fighters also uses rear view mirrors to provide the pilot with a quick rear view. All in all, thanks to its high resolution visuals, digitised speech, FMV footage and all the variety and alterable parameters of a game like Aces Over Europe, US Navy Fighters is a stunning game. Shame the ground detail is a bit flat and sparse but, hey, you can't have everything, can you?

Of course, there is a teensy-weensy problem. Without the SVGA graphics, USNF is just like any other flight sim, and if you haven't got a fast PC, frankly, I think you'd be better off playing something like TFX or Fleet Defender. If you've got a low-end 486 PC, for example, it's becomes absolutely unplayable on anything above (and including) 640x480, and 800x600 is ridiculously snail-like even on our humble Pentium machine. Yes, even the next generation Intel hardware can't power along the incredible USNF graphics in the higher resolutions. You can try it, but be prepared to wave goodbye to playability and say a big hello to 'jerk-o-vision'.

Apart from the speed problems, US Navy Fighters is an excellent game. It's got all the options you'd expect a modern flight sim to have, a variety of customisable features, and graphics that are so good you'll never want to go back to playing in VGA again.

But remember — for this next generation game, you'll need a serious next generation PC. Like it or not, Pentium power and SVGA are staking their claims to be the next big thing, and with games like this (and NASCAR Racing and Super TFX around the corner) who can fail to sit up and take notice. Dear Santa, I've been good and I'd like a Pentium please.



Dogfighting can be fast and frantic in US Navy Fighters, and when you're flying against a couple of Russian Flankers, you soon realise that the F-14, although it packs a huge punch, handles like a proverbial ton of bricks.

It's a bit like...

...TFX or, if you can wait until January, Super TFX, the SVGA sequel. Super TFX not only promises to include a stunning SVGA option, but also multi-player options, new scenarios and better weapons. We'll bring you a preview of the game as soon as we can...

U.S. NAVY FIGHTERS

ELECTRONIC ARTS/IN-HOUSE
(0753) 549442
£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA/SVGA, 4Mb RAM and 8Mb of hard disk space.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...:

- SVGA graphics that you will die for.
- Great sound, superb FMV footage and a variety of digitised speech and sound effects.
- The gameplay's pretty good too.

...AND THE BAD

- You're going to need some seriously powerful hardware to get USNF running smoothly.
- Some multi-player options, but I doubt the phone lines can handle the graphics anyway.
- The ground is a bit, er, crap.

Overall

90%

Novastorm

CD

Alex Fraser gets mean with a laser — but still doesn't do very well at Psygnosis' spectacular shoot-'em-up.

With all of the PC's fabulous processing power, you would have thought that writing a good shoot-'em-up would be the easiest thing in the world for a games company. After all, there's nothing quite like a quick, mindless alien blast for relieving tension after a bad day at the office.

Unfortunately, it seems that they (the game companies) have got the impression that us PC owners aren't content unless we have to use our brains a lot, so while there are plenty of flight sims, god sims, role-playing games, graphic adventures and the like, the poor old shoot-'em-up has been pretty much ignored.

There was Xenon II, of course, and unless you count Shareware, er, that's it, really. Luckily for us hardened zap addicts, however, Psygnosis has obviously spotted this gaping chasm in the market and has filled it with a nifty little game called Novastorm.

As with most shoot-'em-ups, the scenario isn't terribly important to the gameplay, but I'll fill you in anyway. Basically, Novastorm is set in the future, and in best Terminator fashion, computers have attained sentience and have decided that they can do perfectly well without humans cluttering up the universe. And guess who happens to be the only person capable of saving humanity from extinction? Oh come on, I don't think I have to tell you that, do I? No, I should hope not.

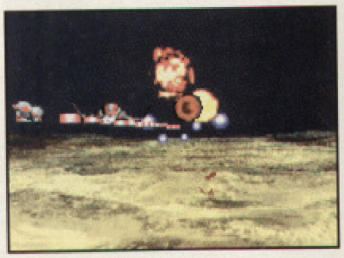
Anyway, this apology of a plot is just an excuse for a long, flashy intro sequence and the chance to climb into your prototype Scavenger 4 spaceship and blast lots of little metallic objects off the screen. (If Scavenger 4 sounds a bit familiar, if you haven't worked it out already, Novastorm was originally called Scavenger 4 and we previewed it way back in issue 2. Ah-haaa...)

In the run-up to its release, Novastorm received a lot of attention on account of its rather smart graphics. Intro sequence aside, it does look very nice — great backgrounds, lots of rendered spaceships (did someone say Silicon Graphics?) and plenty of juicy, animated cut-scenes.

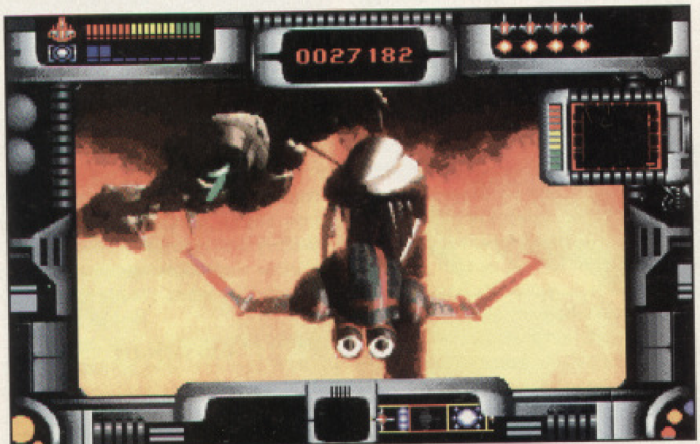
However, for all its fancy looks, it's still a shoot-'em-up, and a basic one at that. It's a forward-scrolling game (you fly "into" the screen along trenches and canyons) in which you view your ship from behind, and if this all sounds horribly familiar, then yes, it is a bit like Psygnosis' other (poor) attempt at a shoot-'em-up, Microcosm.

Both games are very pretty to look at, both games share the same viewpoint, but whereas Microcosm was as dull as ditch water to play, Novastorm is actually quite good. It's fast, it has the right amount of difficulty, the right amount of addictiveness, and if the gameplay is simple, then it bloomin' well ought to be — it's a shoot-'em-up, for heaven's sake.

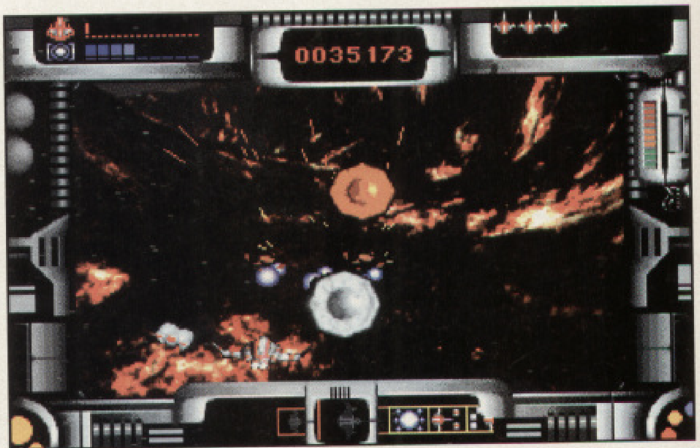
In fact, I can sum up the gameplay in a sentence: little metallic things fly out



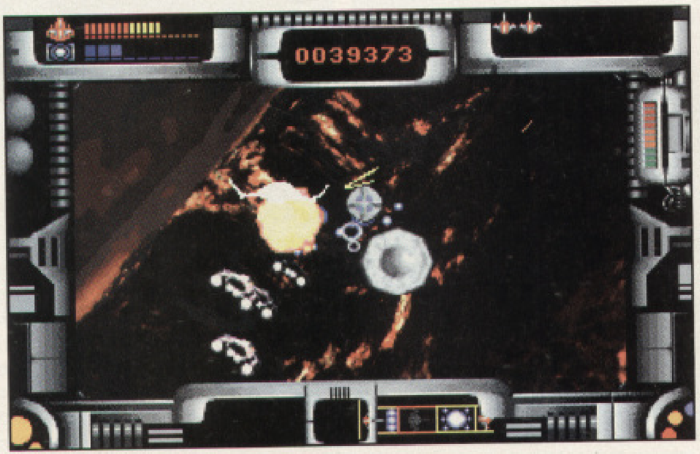
One of the power-ups gives you a laser-firing 'wing-man' — always handy for dealing with any mechanoid stragglers.



This is what happens to you if you fail to kill the third end-of-level boss. It eats you. As they say in Aliens: "Game Over man! Game Over!"



The round objects are power-ups. Grab as many of these as you can, because you don't stand a chance against the end-of-level bosses unless you're packing some serious firepower.

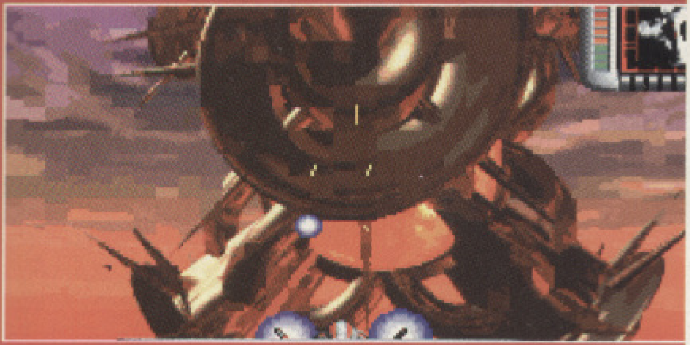


Your ship flashes white when it gets hit, which isn't a good sign. The nice thing about Novastorm is the way that you can also crash into the beautifully-rendered ground as well.

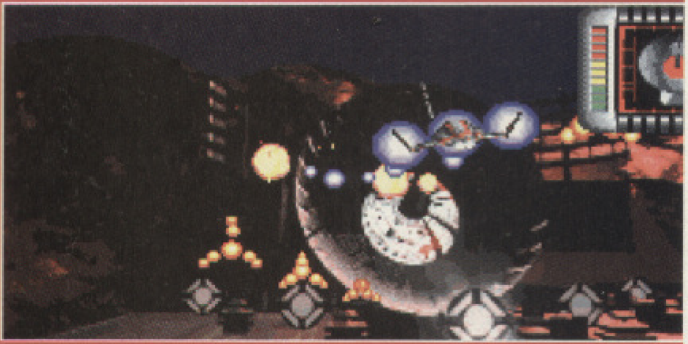
Imagine that bit at the beginning of Terminator, where mankind desperately battles the machines amongst the ruins of a great city... Novastorm's a bit like that really.

Big bad bosses

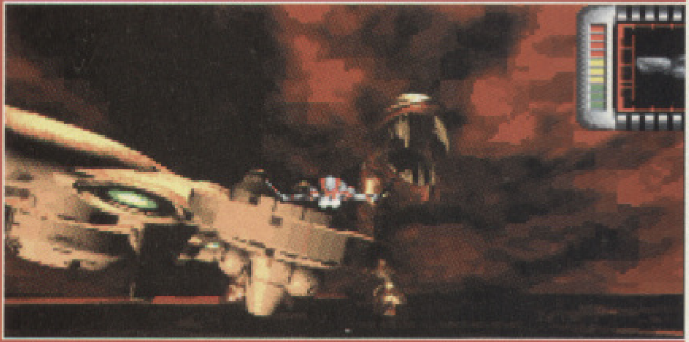
A shoot-'em-up isn't really a shoot-'em-up unless it has some really mean end-of-level guardians or 'bosses' for you to destroy. Here are a few of the big fellas that you meet early on in the game...



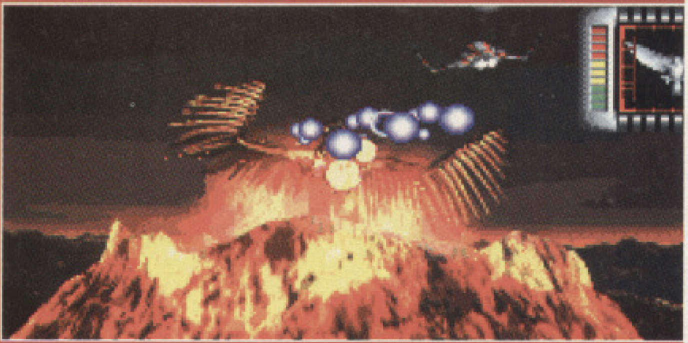
The first big fella is this large satellite thing, which spins around, spraying fireballs and big spiky mines at you. Concentrate your shots on the orange panels to kill this one.



Next comes a ground installation. This one's a piece of cake — just stay at the top of the screen and you won't get hit, though try to shoot the white bit in the middle of the radar dish.

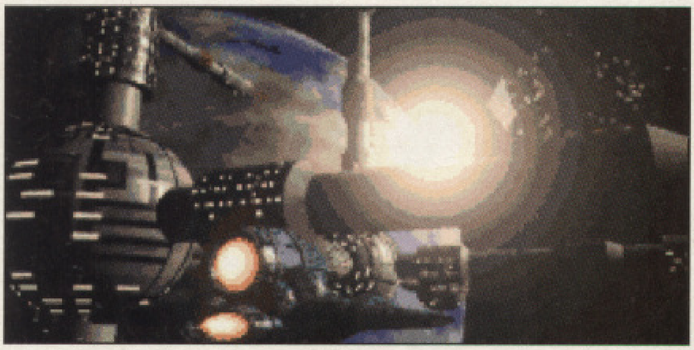


At the end of stage three on the first world you're met by a giant mechanoid snake and accompanying spaceship. Both of these are highly lethal and it usually takes me a couple of goes to get past these guys.



Very nasty. This large metal phoenix thing rises up from the lava and flies around, making it very hard to hit. I still haven't managed kill it, but don't let that deter you...

Yes, this shot's from the intro. You thought it looked a bit too good to be true, didn't you?



of the screen and you shoot them until they stop flying out of the screen. There are, of course, power-ups to collect which add useful items to your ship — your measly single shot turns into a double shot, then a triple shot, and then you start getting little drones which fly around your ship, missiles and so on.

In true shoot-'em-up tradition, at the end of each level, there's a boss to blow up, which is always big, always shoots at you a lot and is always bloody difficult to destroy. Novastorm has 16 levels of little metallic things and great big metallic boss things to blast, which although is doesn't sound like much, is actually more than enough when you consider just how hard the bosses are to kill.

You can play the game on the Hard or Easy level, and you can also customise your game further, awarding yourself either three, five or a massive seven lives. But even when I played on Easy with seven lives, I still couldn't get past the end of the first world. Okay, so I may be a bit crap, but I reckon that even the most veteran shoot-'em-up specialist is going to have his or her work cut out for them.

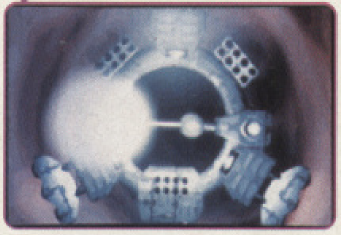
As for the sound, the action is backed by a thumping good techno-style soundtrack — not my usual kind of listening, I hasten to add, but it suits the game perfectly. Unfortunately the sound effects are a bit on the weedy side. Instead of BOOM! and ZAP! and KERBLAAM! you get fweep, fffzzzt and blip, which really isn't very inspiring. I mean, this is a space battle, for god's sake, not a firework display in a neighbour's back garden on November 5th. Let's have some explosions!

To sum up, Novastorm is a better than average shoot-'em-up on a machine which badly needs some better than average shoot-'em-ups on it. The graphics are very nice and the music is excellent, but if you took these away the result wouldn't be all that impressive.

As a shoot-'em-up it does the job, but remember that it is *just* a shoot-'em-up, so don't expect anything out of the ordinary, especially if you've graduated to the PC from Amigas and consoles, where games like this are two-a-penny. Just think Project-X in 3D, and you have Novastorm in a nutshell

It's a bit like...

...Microcosm. Now Microcosm was a case of 'nice graphics, shame about the game', whereas Novastorm is 'nice graphics, not a bad game either.' Microcosm put you in charge of a miniature sub floating through the human body — a nice idea. but unfortunately it didn't really work. In fact, it's probably best avoided. Even if you see it in a bargain bin at Future Zone...



NOVASTORM$^{\text{CD}}$

PSYGNOSIS/IN-HOUSE

(051) 709 5755

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 386, VGA, 4MB RAM and CD-ROM drive

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Good intro sequence, great backgrounds, nice sprites.
- A thumping good soundtrack.

...AND THE BAD

- Well, it is only a shoot-'em-up.
- Your own ship sprite looks... well it looks a bit crap, to be honest.
- Weedy sound effects.

Overall

75%

Alps, schmalps! Alex Fraser rides his herd of elephants against the legions of Rome.

Hannibal

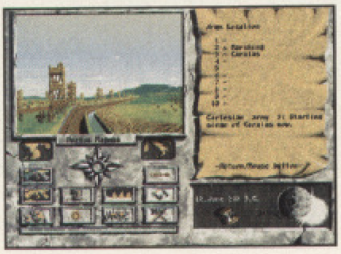
Everybody remembers Hannibal. No, he's not that bloke in the A-Team played by George Peppard, he's the man who took a mighty army and some performing elephants for a fantastic jaunt across the Alps.

But what you probably don't know, is that Hannibal's bit of pachyderm mountaineering came in the middle of a fascinating military campaign that proved, once and for all, that the armies of Rome were no match for the tactical skill of an elephant-lover from Carthage.

But how would *you* deal with the armies of Rome, given the same set of resources (and yes, herd of elephants) that Hannibal had? Well, now's your chance to find out, because Hannibal from Krisalis is a game that plonks you straight into the second Carthaginian campaign, and asks you to shake the mighty Roman Empire by the tunic. Your ultimate goal is to take Rome itself, and that's no mean task, considering all those skirt-wearing legionnaires who stand firmly in your way.

You begin the game with a map of the Mediterranean, three armies, and a handful of icons that give you all the important information you need — strength, food, morale, etc. Although touted as a strategy game, Hannibal is concerned more with logistics and most of your time will be spent shifting your armies around, buying supplies, mercenaries, horses, etc.

Alternatively, however, you can order your armies to lay siege to cities and steal what you need. But while this violent approach may be initially appealing, don't expect people to welcome you with open arms when they hear that you burnt the nearby fishing village to the ground.



Your aim is to keep your armies growing until you can split them up into more armies, which then grow bigger themselves, and... well, you get the general idea. Obviously, you'll end up being on good terms with some folks, and bad terms with others. C'est la guerre, as they say. But while you rampage northwards, you also have to keep your colonies sweet, which may mean syphoning off some of those war funds to offer town subsidies, build fortifications for front-line towns or to lower taxes to help the poorer people out.

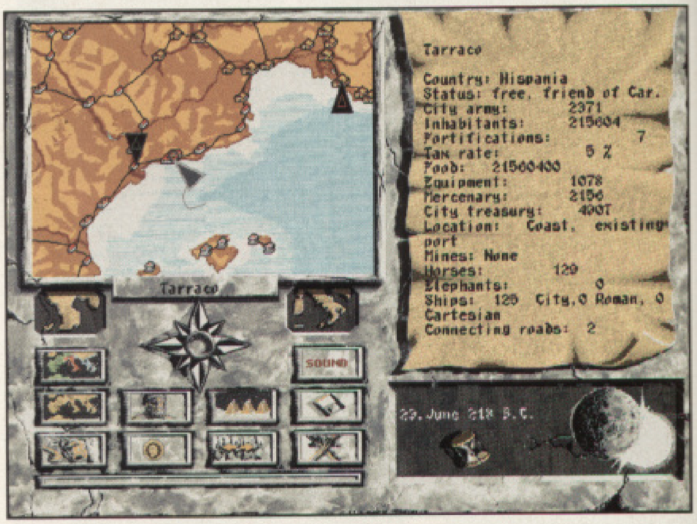
Ah yes, every Imperial wanna-be needs to be a bit of an economist. Keeping yourself tightly financed keeps your troops fed, particularly over the months when you have retired to winter camp. There's nothing more disheartening than breaking camp in the spring and finding that half your men froze or starved to death before the first thaw.

Hannibal lets you take on a variety of the duties involved in a major military campaign (and this one goes over several years) without overwhelming you with unnecessary detail or spurious and irrelevant facts. The combat itself, when two armies finally meet, is simply a case of choosing an offensive or defensive posture and picking a troop formation — different formations work under different conditions.

Then you start the battle, watching the numbers of troops, horses and elephants decrease as the slaughter commences. If at any stage you decide that you're onto a loser, then you can cut your losses and run. Sadly, there's not much more to the actual fighting part, but that's not the main point behind the game. I do feel slightly disappointed, but the combat isn't really to blame.

My disappointment with Hannibal concerns the missed opportunities. The actual game is fine, but after you've duffed up the Romans once, it becomes rather dull. A randomiser option would have been nice, whereby the computer would come up with new scenarios, or a good series of historical campaigns would have been a bonus.

But no, you play Hannibal in the second Carthaginian war, or nothing. It's well worth doing, certainly, but some cheap add-on disks could be in order here. But while we wait, if you fancy a strategic challenge with a difference, then why not try to emulate the heroic deeds of Hannibal? It beats playing another World War Two game.



```
Tarraco

Country: Hispania
Status: free. friend of Car.
City army:          2371
Inhabitants:        215604
Fortifications:            7
Tax rate:             5 %
Food:    21560400
Equipment:          1078
Mercenary:          2156
City treasury:       4907
Location:    Coast.  existing
port
Mines: None
Horses:           129
Elephants:              0
Ships:  129  City,0 Roman, 0
Cartesian
Connecting roads:  2
```

(Above) Getting the overall picture of whose armies are where, and which cities lie between them, is shown on these maps.

HANNIBAL

Krisalis/StarByte

(0709) 372290

£29.99 Out Now

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA/SVGA and 10Mb of hard disk space.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Roman Europe during Hannibal's campaigns is a cracking historical backdrop for a strategy game.
- The gameplay isn't over-complex, but it's hardly a doddle.
- Not quite as slick as a sandpapered eel, but it's not far off.

...AND THE BAD

- Just the one scenario, without any randomiser option — a bit limiting once you finish the campaign.
- The Roman commanders make some real donkey decisions over the years.

Overall

72%

ADDICTION WARNING

"After two minutes, I was hooked..the manic nature of Vital Light makes for a very enjoyable game indeed..the gameplay is great. If tricky. And hard"
Amiga Action

"Without doubt one of the most addictive games I've played since Tetris on the Game Boy. Slick presentation, finely tuned gameplay and an unusual twist make this one to watch out for if you like your grey matter to be excercised as much as your trigger finger."
The One

"One of the most infuriatingly addictive games to appear on the Amiga"
CU Amiga

Cover disks on The One and Amiga Action.

Available for £29.99.

VITAL light

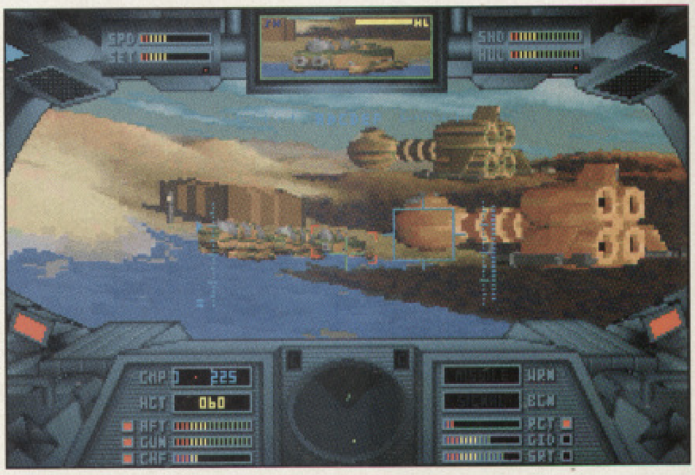
A500 A600 A1200 • CD32 • PC Windows

PURE ADDICTION

MILLENNIUM

Retribution

Previous relationships with alien races haven't been overly fruitful. Our own extra-terrestrial diplomat Alex Fraser finds out some things just don't change.


Retribution's Voxel Space 3D engine is the best you've ever seen. Sure, the images still get a little blocky when you're up close to them, but nowhere near as badly as, say, Comanche's.

Appearances are frequently deceptive. Take, for example, LucasArts' breath-taking Rebel Assault. Visually it was and still is unparalleled, but when it comes to good old-fashioned gameplay it was seriously lacking. Far too often over-zealous developers concentrate on visual perfection and forget about the actual 'guts' of the game. But what of Gremlin's graphically excellent mammoth space epic? Is Retribution just another software supermodel blessed with cosmetic beauty, or is there a meaty challenge lurking beneath the game's extravagant exterior?

You'll have undoubtedly seen countless other games which look remarkably similar to Retribution. There is, of course, Novalogic's chopper game, Comanche: Maximum Overkill, and the same company's new all-action tank simulation Armoured Fist (reviewed this very issue on page 72), both of which use Voxel Spacing 3D to varying degrees of success.

But neither of these games move as smoothly or as swiftly as Retribution's Talonis-Tarra fighter craft as it glides effortlessly across the mountainous lunar terrains. Indeed, the engine which drives the treacherous landscape overshadows virtually anything you've seen before, but unfortunately Retribution isn't without its problems. Frequently the scenery blurs into a blocky mess of over-sized pixels, making it difficult to actually work out where you're going. However, before we pick holes in the game's technical faults, here's why you're skimming across rugged wastelands inhabited by a grotesque alien race in the first place.

After countless futile invasions against the human race, who'd have thought an extraterrestrial race would have come to our aid? The future is bleak, mankind has been devastated by raging wars and food is in frighteningly short supply. It seemed like the human race was on the brink of extinction.

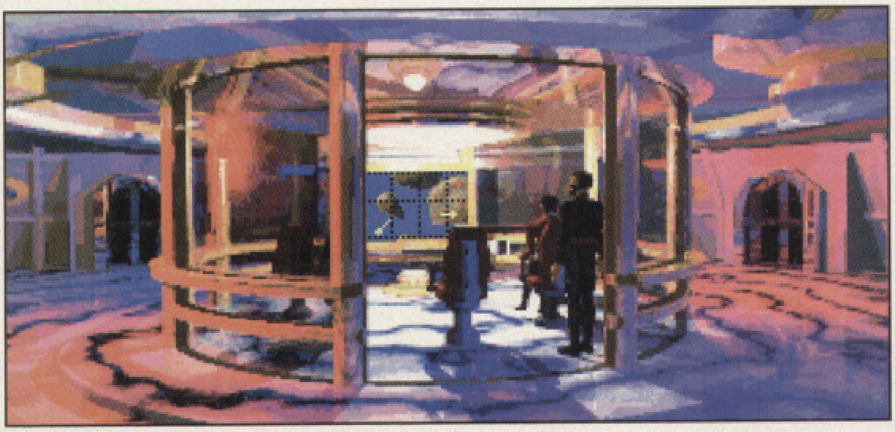
Then the Krellans arrived. Bringing advanced medicines and technologies, the Krellans used their skills to solve the food shortage and taught mankind to live in union. Things changed for the better, but then it all went horribly wrong. All the while the Krellans were creating life from death, they were cloning humans in bio-pods and then using them as a source of protein. Put simply, the Krellans are using the human race as a virtually inexhaustible supply of food.

Before the aliens reduce us mere mortals to meat in a bioburger, garnished with lung-butter relish, a lone soldier is called upon to battle against the Krellans before they initiate their final assault on Earth. Beamed aboard the space station Aphelion, the sheer vastness of the mission ahead soon becomes apparent.

The Krellan's alien army is spread across 11 different worlds, each one home to vicious alien soldiers armed with mind-blowing weapons (literally!) and equipped with some spectacular armoured attack vehicles, thus neatly providing 11 seperate 'campaigns' to tackle. It's these Krellan installations and processing plants that must be destroyed, wiped from existence by a few well-aimed blasts from the fighter-mounted ion cannon.

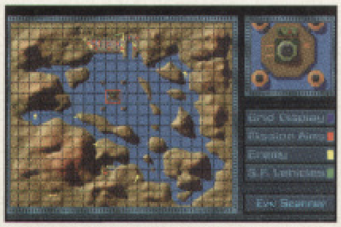
Jumping into the thick of the action is probably not the best option to choose just yet though. Before you clamber into the cockpit and hit the hyperspace button, take a few minutes to explore the space station.

Skulking on the bridge is the Aphelion General, commander of the Federation's attack on the Krellan homeworlds. Talking to him will reveal sketchy details about the forthcoming mission, highlighting the numerous targets which must be eliminated during each sortie. More info can be gleaned by chatting to the female Coordinator who waits in an room adjacent, where you'll also find the training simulator.

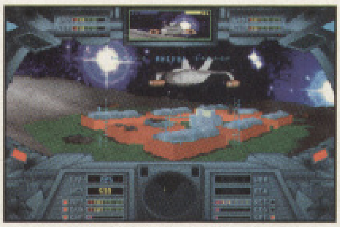

On the Aphelion there are numerous rendered locations to visit, each home to various commanding officers who you can chat to about the upcoming missions. Some will also offer you handy survival hints.

Express *Lift To Hell!*

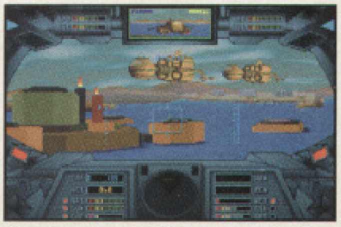
Entering the planet atmosphere in the dropship, the ATV is dumped in the thick of the action. The engineers wishes you good luck before leaving.



By clicking on any of the map's grid squares, you can get a close-up view of the terrain which is shown in the top-right corner.



Most of the eleven campaigns, each consisting of four or five missions, centre around destroying a major Krellan installation.



Each campaign is set on a different planet, which allows for a great deal of variety in the terrain graphics.

The training room gives rookie pilots the chance to hone their flying and combat skills in both the fighter and the ground-based All Terrain Vehicle. Practice will eventually make it easier to pilot both vehicles, allowing you to familiarise yourself with the control system and improve your shooting skills with both rockets and laser cannons.

Leaving behind the warm safety of the space station to step inside the Coursa dropship, various consoles can be examined and information regarding the next mission acquired, as well as loads of technical blueprints on both Federation and Krellan ships. For general tips on engaging the enemy, try talking to REM's Michael Sti... um, the bald-headed engineer who pilots the Coursa and basically gives rookies a hard time whenever they make even the slightest mistake. (Don't worry — he warms to you eventually, once you've completed a few missions.)

With a whole lot of courage and a shoddy attack plan in mind, it's time to kiss goodbye to ol' Stipey and dust-off on the planet's hilly surface. Armed to the teeth with rockets, guided missiles and a bundle of other thermonuclear weaponry, within seconds the terrifying onslaught begins.

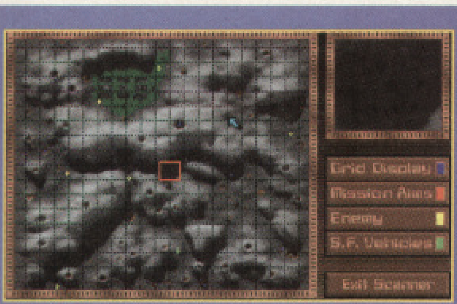
The fighter and the ATV are both mouse, joystick or keyboard controlled, the first being the default and arguably the easiest of the three. Handling like an aircraft (i.e. push forward to go down, pull back to go up), it takes a short while to feel at ease with the controls. The fighter must be handled gently, otherwise you'll end up spiralling into the ground; nudge the mouse rather than shove, and ship will glide smoothly along.

Targetting the enemy at the same time as flying is a different matter entirely though. Weapons like the laser cannon and unguided rockets fire directly ahead and are aimed using the fixed cross-hair. Obviously factors like movement of both your vessel and the enemy ship must be taken into consideration, 'leading' the target in order to successfully strike home.

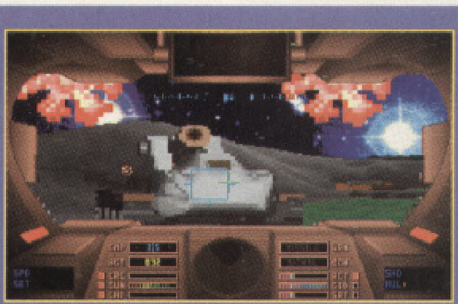
Rockets are most effective against ground installations and other immobile targets, whereas lasers can be used against anything from opposing fighters to sea-based troop carriers. Homing missiles, on the other hand, are only good against vehicles. Using the ship's computer to acquire a suitable target, it takes a few seconds before a positive lock is attained. The missile is then launched and, providing no countermeasures are dropped, will eventually strike the target. Smart missiles, which can be strapped to both the fighter and the tank, are less powerful than rockets, as they are fitted with larger tracking devices which makes them more accurate than any other weapon.

Initially the first few missions are simple 'seek and destroy' affairs. After leaving the dropship, consult the map which displays all the mission objectives and then open the engine up and speed off. Difficulty is kept to a minimum for the first campaign, so don't expect anything more challenging than a persistent Krellan who buzzes around, occasionally unleashing the odd hail of plasma bolts.

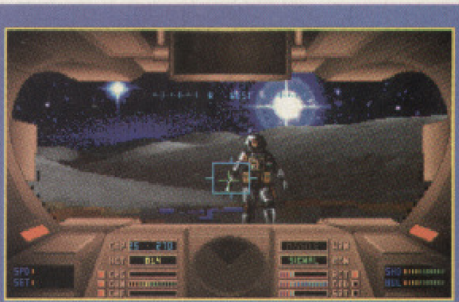
By the time you reach the third mission, a little more thought is required. The Talonis-Tarra fighter is docked back aboard the Coursa for repairs, making way for the ATV to embark on its first mission. Where as the fighter can move freely across the landscape, the tank obviously has problems negotiating steep hills and sheer cliff faces. It does have the advantage of being able to



Each of the mission objectives is detailed on the map screen, along with the positions on enemy units. The green arrow represents your current position.



The objective in this mission is to rescue the stranded scientists, but the area is swarming with Krellan battle tanks which must be eliminated first.



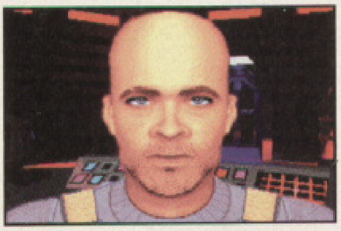
After closing in on the scientists' location, radio their coordinates to Aphelion command and protect them as they wait to be beamed aboard.

The Evil From Outer Space

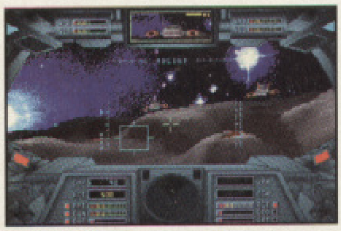
By the beginning of the 24th Century, the Earth was in ruin. Mankind was on the brink of extinction, with food in short supply and vicious wars raging across the globe.

Then the Krellans arrived. The aliens bought advanced medicines and taught mankind to life in union. Slowly, they managed to rebuild Earth into its glorious, former self.

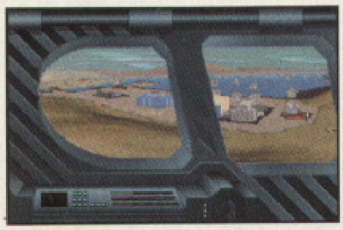
The Krellans had perfected terraforming techniques, which allowed the human race to spread throughout the galaxy and therefore solved the problems of over-population.



Dave reckons the engineer looks like Homer Simpson. Hmm, he's got a point...



Take that, alien scumbags! (Or something.)



From the cockpit you can look out of the side and rear windows.

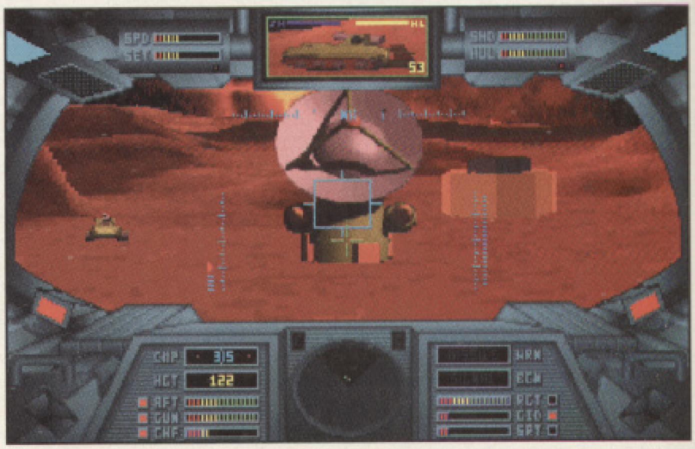
hide in valleys though, the rocky canyon walls protecting the tank from aerial attacks.

The ATV is primarily used for reconnaissance missions, trundling through the war zone in search of stranded scientists and the like; drive in close to the lost soul, then guard them while the Aphelion beams them aboard. With all friendly units rescued, the ATV has fulfilled its purpose and we return to the fighter which has now been equipped with the thermonuclear Vulcan device.

This device, when dropped, slowly emits powerful heatwaves which cause the surrounding rock to melt, rendering the planet useless and incapable of sustaining life. Other special weapons racked in the fighter's gun racks are torpedoes chaff. Chaff is, of course, used to confuse incoming missiles while the torpedo can be dropped over water, where they then home in on their target.

The All-Terrain Vehicle is also equipped with a custom weapons, namely the intelligent time bomb which can be dropped at any point during the game. Each of the Krellan home planets, of which there are eleven, must be destroyed, using the weapons to cripple the alien invaders before they can begin the assault on Earth.

After the relative simplicity of the first campaign, difficulty soon rockets skywards when you're dropped on the second location, an Aqua moon. Like the initial confrontation, this second scenario is divided into missions which must be completed in turn, returning after each one to replenish ammo supplies and repair any damage sustained. Even though any blast marks are patched up after every sortie, it's all very easy to take one too many hits and unfortunately (for you) the fighter isn't fitted with an ejector seat.



All of the enemy vehicles and some of the installations, like this radar dish, are pre-generated sprites that are 3D scaled in real-time. The sprites are all based on rendered images, which accounts for their unusual 'squeaky-clean' look.

But wait! Due to the game's enormity there is a save game option, accessed via the personal computer located on the dropship. Aphelion control can also be contacted from this terminal, along with various options which alter graphic detail levels to make the game run more smoothly on slower machines.

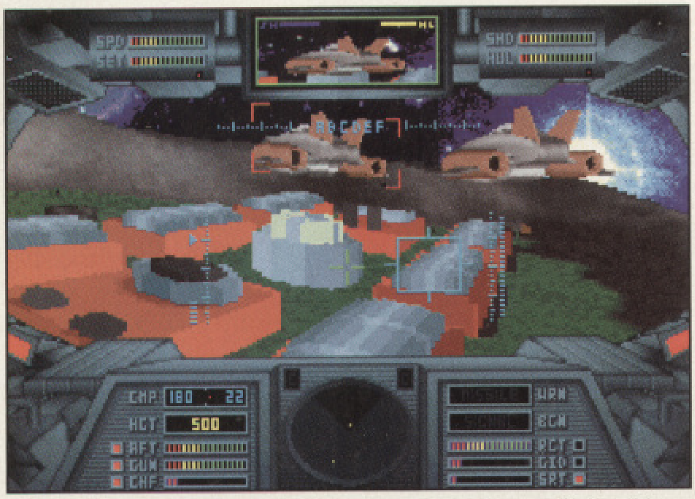
But to be honest, if you've got a reasonable PC, say a 486SX 25, you won't have to sacrifice detail for speed. Graphically Retribution really is excellent. The intro sequence, a lengthy rendered epic, is again superb, setting the scene for the game perfectly. The narration which overlays the cinematic sequence is both clear and well-spoken, and manages to create a sense of tension as the Krellans stick the knife in the back of the human race.

The various cut-scenes are also gorgeous, showing the fighter as it leaves the dropship and so on. While they don't actually play an essential role in the game, they help pass away the time as the game sluggishly loads up the next battle.

As you'd expect from a CD game, all dialogue is digitised speech. Unlike previous talkie titles, the dialogue actually matches the character talking, which helps to create a dramatic atmosphere. In fact the only fault I found with the cut-scene presentation was the character portraits, which look as though

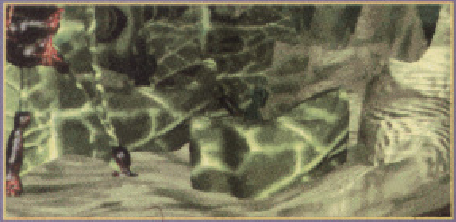
It's a bit like...

...Novalogic's Comanche — and Armoured Fist for that matter. Using essentially the same Voxel Space graphic technique, Retribution features diverse terrains but manages to move more smoothly than the aforementioned pair. The only major difference between them is that obviously Retribution is set in space while the other aren't.

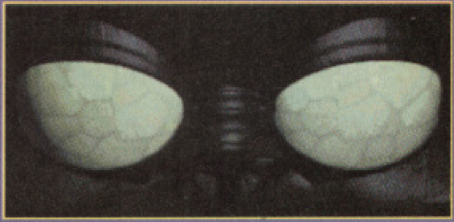


Although your laser cannons are relatively feeble, they have the advantage of being quick to use — with missiles you have to wait for the computer to lock-on before you can fire.

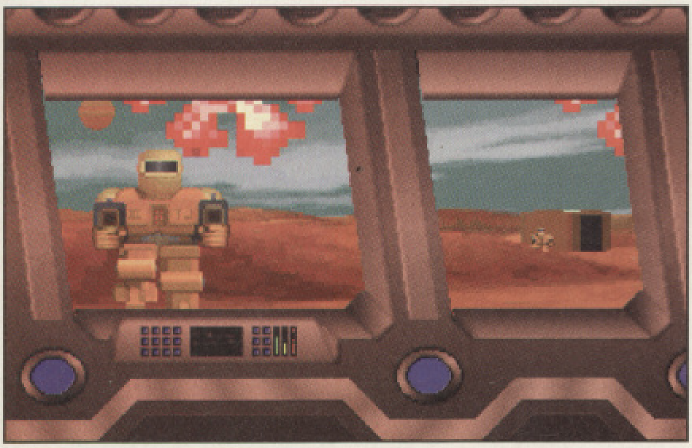
But all good things must come to an end. It started to go wrong when a drifting escape pod was retrieved by a Federation space station. A girl was found inside, frozen...



A brain scan of the girl proved confusing, but within seconds it became all too clear. The Krellans were cloning humans in bio-pods and then using them as a source of protein.



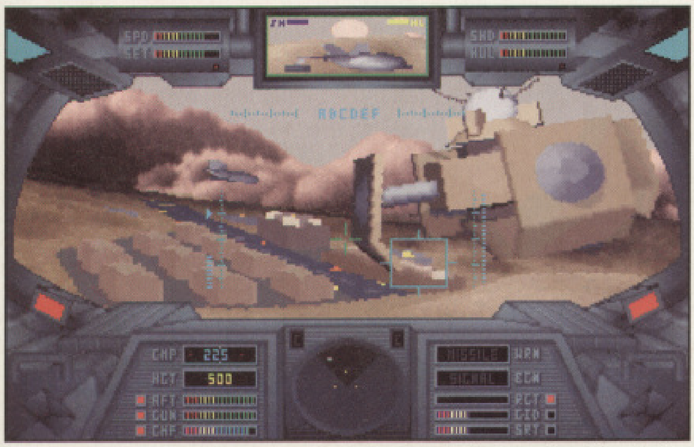
Aaiiee! All the time the Krellans were 'helping' mankind, they were cloning them and using them as an endless source of food! It's time to thank the Krellans for all they've done...



A brief glimpse out of the All-Terrain Vehicle's left-side window reveals why your shields have been mysteriously depleting — there's a Krellan foot-soldier out there, and he's got two bloody great big guns!

Each campaign is cleverly structured so that it builds naturally to an exciting climax in the last mission, in which you have to use a newly-developed 'Super Weapon' against the Krellan enemy.

Trundling through canyons and valleys in the All-Terrain Vehicle, battling Krellans tanks, isn't quite as exciting as flying around the space fighter, but these missions add variety to the game.



War in space makes you thirsty — at least, that's what Captain Kia-Ora used to tell me. Lucky I've got a few cans of Coke to hand, because it looks like I'm going to need them.

they've been nabbed from Wing Commander. Not a problem you might say, but the lip-synching is awful. Christ, I only thought my mother-in-law's lips could move that quickly! (Don't be sexist, Alex! — Dave.)

But you've already looked at all the screenshots, you know the game looks pretty damn good. What about the gameplay, though? Is it simply another case of outstanding presentation and very little else? Well no, not really. While the simply excellent graphics will catch your attention, it's the gameplay itself which will keep you lost in space, intent on destroying the marauding Krellan forces.

Initially the game seems like little more than a three-dimensional shoot-'em-up — which I suppose it is, to some extent. But there's much more to Retribution than simply zipping around in a nifty spaceship, blasting anything that screams out in front of you. The missions are constructed in such a way that you can't simply attack the nearest target and hope to survive the ensuing alien onslaught.

Instead, a simple battle plan must be devised, based on the layout of the map and any information gained from talking to your colleagues. True, this may only be as sophisticated as sticking to the canyons and hiding behind any cover possible, but all the same, it could save your life.

The game is surprisingly varied, not only in the mission objectives and the terrain they're set on, but with the two vehicles to pilot. Both handle differently and are therefore suited to seperate missions. Most of the fighter missions are simple seek-and-destroy affairs, although they obviously become increasing difficult as the game progresses, with the Krellans appearing in greater numbers and in more versatile craft, attacking with a ferocity never before encountered.

Then there's the tank, which is equally effective in combat but can also be used on recon missions. While this variety does make the game generally more enjoyable, Retribution still lacks the long-term excitement to keep most fighter pilots hooked right up until the eleventh campaign.

In fact, the game is far from faultless. For instance, the Voxel Space-style graphics still aren't perfect, the blocky graphics are often annoying although not quite to the same extent of Armoured Fist's Duplo-esque scenery. There's also the lengthy waiting times while the game loads up the next mission, which sometimes take an eternity (well, almost). It's tiny flaws like these that make Retribution a good game, rather than the excellent one it could well have been.

RETRIBUTION CD

GREMLIN INT./ASTROS

(0742) 753423

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM and double-speed CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; joystick; Sound Blaster, AdLib and Roland soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Visually impressive, with a slick game engine which knocks the likes of Comanche for six.
- Furious shoot-'em-up action set across a variety of missions, totalling some fifty-odd in all.
- Generally excellent presentation; smart graphics, good sound... the lot.

...AND THE BAD

- The landscapes are occasionally blocky and confusing.
- Retribution lacks real long-term excitement.
- Lots of laborious loading between missions.

Overall

80%

cd updates

No, of course it isn't just the same game slapped onto CD with a lavish five-minute intro sequence. Tsch! How could you possibly think such a thing? Just take a look at these, says Dean Evans...

Dream Web^{CD}

As I said last month, Dream Web is probably the most atmospheric game I've played so far this year. Set in a dark, neon-lit, Cyberpunk-style future, it tells the story of Ryan, a quiet downtown barman who has been chosen to murder seven influential public figures.

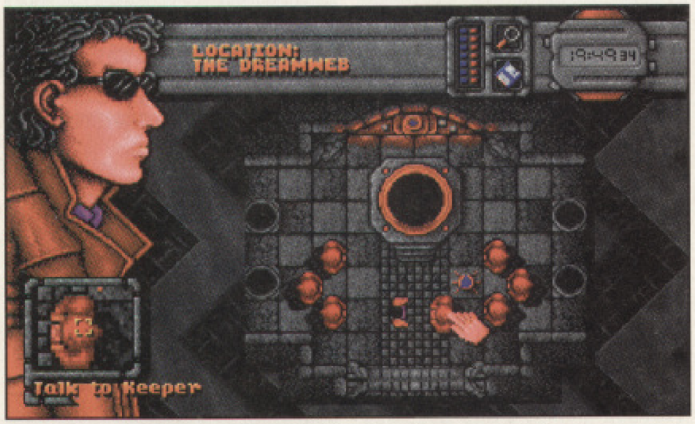
He's been told to kill these people by an immortal monk, because it seems that they are threatening the Dream Web, a mystical force that regulates man's collective subconscious. There's also something about a serial killer and Father Christmas, but I haven't quite worked that bit out yet.

Anyway, despite the Bladerunner-style feel and the unusual top-down graphic viewpoint, Dream Web has all the trappings and features of a traditional graphic adventure — i.e. you wander around numerous locations, collecting objects and then using them to solve a number of logical puzzles.

What sets it apart from your usual 'Use object A with object B' game, however, is its moody, almost oppressive feel. This is a world where you could get mugged for your trainers, a world dominated by computer networks and smart cards, and a world where you can buy a .44 Magnum and blow huge, bloody holes in people without anybody even batting an eyelid. As you can imagine, the feel of the game is superb and although the puzzles in Dream Web don't exactly fall into the 'difficult' category (and this is a great shame), the game is forced along at a terrific pace, propelled by the strong narrative and the malevolent scenario.

Naturally, the CD version of the game doesn't do anything wildly original, it just adds a huge amount of digitised speech. But what a difference it makes. The soundtrack is moody and atmospheric enough, but when you can hear all the voices of the characters, from young Scouse schoolgirls to smooth-talking villains, the game becomes better and much more realistic than its floppy counterpart.

And so we come to that paragraph that almost sums up any CD Update game, so say it along with me if you know it... If you've already bought Dream Web, think long and hard before parting with your money just to hear a few digitised voices. But if you haven't already discovered Dream Web and you're the proud owner of a new CD-ROM drive, then why not give this adventure a try. It may not keep you hardened adventurers occupied for very long, but it's a good game; atmospheric, engaging and very playable.



EMPIRE/CREATIVE REALITY

(081) 343 7337

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 2Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

Overall

88%

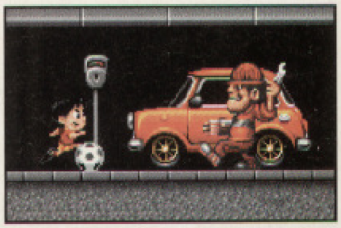
Soccer Kid^{CD}

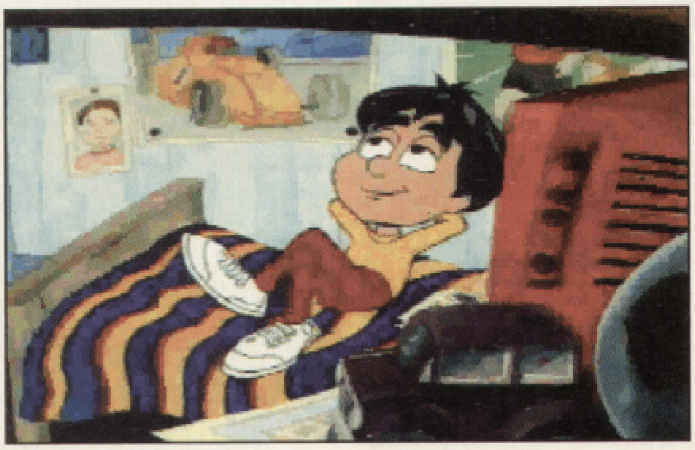
The PC is not famous for its great back catalogue of platform titles, so Soccer Kid is one of the most refreshing leap-and-jump games to come along in quite some time. Plot-wise, it's 1994 and the World Cup trophy has been stolen and smashed by a passing alien. The five fragments have fallen onto different parts of the Earth and it's up to the game's young hero, Soccer Kid, to jet around world and retrieve the bits.

It's no small task either. There are five platform-filled countries to be negotiated — England, Italy, Russia, Japan and America, to be precise — each of which consist of three individual sub-levels plus a bonus game. To finish a level, Soccer Kid must collect the flashing football cards and deal with the wandering baddies — bricklayers, opera singers, singing ice-cream salesmen, etc — by hoofing his football at them.

Although traditional and very formulaic as far as platform games go, it's great fun to play. The soundtrack is suitably catchy, and Soccer Kid's ability to perform a variety of different kicks and moves adds an interesting twist. But, and you probably knew there was going to be a 'but' in here somewhere, this new CD version doesn't really add anything new to the game.

Well, that's not strictly true. It does add a two-minute, cartoon-style intro sequence and numerous in-between level cutscenes, but when you get right down to the nitty-gritty business of gameplay enhancements, Soccer Kid scores a big, fat zero. I'm sorry to say that Soccer Kid CD *is* just the same old game, slapped onto CD with a lavish intro sequence. So, the rules that I applied to Dream Web definitely apply here. Buy it if you haven't got it (it's a lot of fun), but steer well clear if you've already got the floppy version sitting on a shelf above your PC. Of course, if you hate platform games, don't buy either version. The choice, as they say oh so eloquently on Blind Date, is yours.





KRISALIS/IN-HOUSE

(0709) 372290

£29.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

33MHz 386, VGA, 1Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; Sound Blaster soundcard.

Overall

79%

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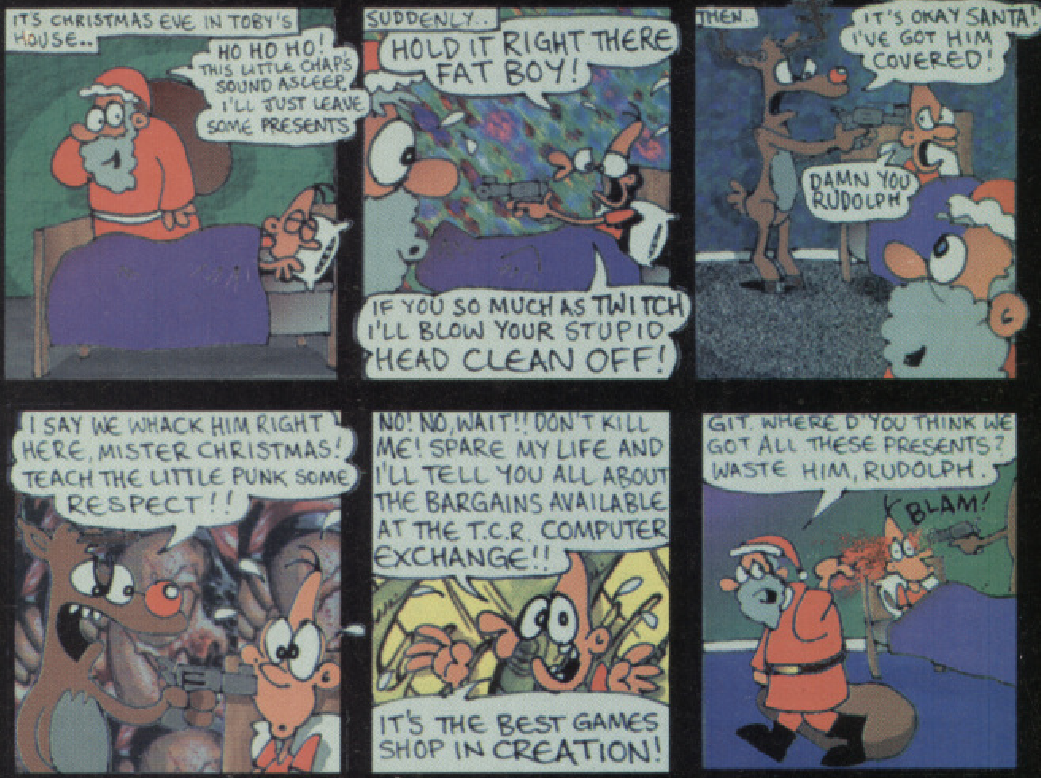
IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE IN TOBY'S HOUSE..
HO HO HO! THIS LITTLE CHAP'S SOUND ASLEEP. I'LL JUST LEAVE SOME PRESENTS
SUDDENLY..
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE FAT BOY!
IF YOU SO MUCH AS TWITCH I'LL BLOW YOUR STUPID HEAD CLEAN OFF!
THEN..
IT'S OKAY SANTA! I'VE GOT HIM COVERED!
DAMN YOU RUDOLPH
I SAY WE WHACK HIM RIGHT HERE, MISTER CHRISTMAS! TEACH THE LITTLE PUNK SOME RESPECT!!
NO! NO, WAIT!! DON'T KILL ME! SPARE MY LIFE AND I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THE BARGAINS AVAILABLE AT THE T.C.R. COMPUTER EXCHANGE!!
IT'S THE BEST GAMES SHOP IN CREATION!
GIT. WHERE D'YOU THINK WE GOT ALL THESE PRESENTS? WASTE HIM, RUDOLPH.
BLAM!

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Budget Reviews

It's almost Christmas, **and if you're looking for a cheap stocking-filler that's slightly more fun than a bag of nuts and a tangerine, then why not rummage around in the bargain-bin and try some of these cut-price gems...**

Space Quest IV

I've never been a regular player of the Space Quest series (now in its sixth episode), but I must admit that I've been pleasantly surprised at just how enjoyable and downright sarcastic this oldie adventure is.

If you're not familiar with the Space Quest saga, the games chronicle the exploits of Roger Wilco, an intergalactic janitor. In this, his fourth adventure, the plot revolves around a suitably mad supercomputer that has decided to meddle with the space/time continuum and the very fabric of the universe.

It has also mercilessly wiped out the peace-loving and machine-trusting inhabitants of the planet Xenon, which, by an amazing coincidence, is the very planet our heroic toilet-cleaner was born on.

Like the other Space Quest adventures, Space Quest IV is a whistle-stop tour of weird locales and time zones, as well as being a vehicle for a variety of quips, gags and science fiction references. The game also contains a bizarre set of amusing, stereotypical characters, including a burger bar owner who looks like a bull and Roger's vengeful, scantily-clad ex-girlfriend.

For an old game, the graphics in Space Quest IV are still very impressive, and the comic-style locations, in conjunction with the subtle music and sound effects, give the game the look and feel of a 1930's pulp sci-fi story.

The point 'n' click control interface is simple and if you've played any other adventure game within the past year, it takes very little time to get used to. The Walk, Get and Examine options are all accessed via an icon-driven menu bar at the top of the screen, and this only appears when you move the mouse pointer towards it. What this means is that you get an uncluttered view of the graphics and the pretty animated sequences of Roger walking, climbing, falling, and, of course, dying.

Despite its age, Space Quest IV is still a fun game to play and while the humour may not send you into uncontrollable hysterics, it will almost certainly bring a smile to your face.

If I have one quibble it's that the game is a little unforgiving. Make a wrong move or fail to act fast enough and you can end up dying far too often. If you accidentally walk into a cyborg taking a stroll, you can't apologise, offer it a cigarette and escape in the confusion. He just shoots you, and you die.

But, this aside, if you've played around with Simon the Sorcerer and spat your way through Monkey Island 2, then why not try your adventuring hand at Space Quest IV. It looks nice, it plays well and, by god, it will even make you laugh. And all this for less than 17 quid too. What more could you ask for?

KIXX XL/SIERRA

(021) 606 1800

£16.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 1Mb RAM, 3Mb of hard disk space and mouse

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

Overall

80%

D/Generation

D/Generation is a strange game, a mix of puzzle, platform, and shoot-'em-up elements that, when bound together, form something very closely resembling an arcade adventure. You are a courier delivering an important and essential package to a top scientist at the Genoq Corporation. But, ominously, a crisis has developed up in Genoq's high-rise office building and an army of artificial bioengineered enzymes, called Neogens, has escaped.

And what's this D/Generation business? Well, the D/Generation is the fourth evolution of these bizarre Neogen creatures and so there's also an A/generation, a B/Generation and so on. Sadly, they all look the same, but the situations and puzzles that they appear in during the game, more than make up for the lack of graphical variety.

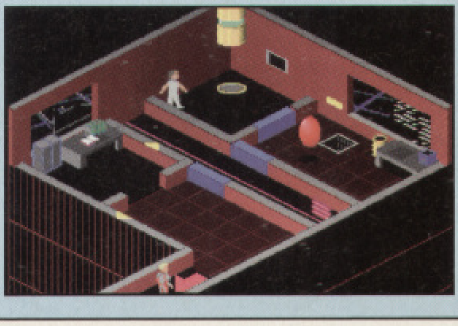
You see, there's lots of these peculiar blob-like creatures wandering about the building and it's up to you to move from room to room, outwitting traps and shooting the enzymes, while you search the ten floors for the Head Scientist who's caused all the mess. Each room must be individually secured and various objects need to be collected before you can move on to the next and then on to the other levels of the building.

Despite its age and the basic graphics, D/Generation is still a challenging game, due to the immediate problems pose by the blobs and the varied and ever more complicated set up of each room — switches, buttons, doors that won't open until you pull a lever, etc.

Besides the puzzles, there are also some stranded office personnel to rescue and talking to them can reveal various clues about how to get to the Head Scientist, who is hiding ten floors above the one you begin on. There are also computer terminals scattered about the rooms that can be accessed for more vital information, helping you to piece together the story and to work out exactly what's going on.

If you've been playing games for a while, playing D/Generation might remind you of the old Spectrum classics Head Over Heels and Atic Atac. Each room is a separate puzzle and while D/Generation has a little more colour than Head Over Heels, it's slightly simpler, and requires quick reflexes rather than observation, pixel-perfect platform skills and a bit of brain-power.

But, if I can be brutally honest, D/Generation gets a little dull after a while. The backgrounds don't change and the puzzles, although varied, rarely surpass the 'kill blob, push lever, open door, dodge gun' variety. There's also very little atmosphere in the game, and even though it's selling for less than a tenner and runs under Windows, if you're looking to recapture the days of Knightlore and Alien-8, then take a look at the new breed of CD games like Little Big Adventure and Ecstatica. Of course, if you've still got a old machine, then D/Generation offers puzzles and combat without the flashy graphics and FM stereo sound. It's aged quite badly but, hey, it's cheap.



ACTION 16/MINDSCAPE

(0276) 684959

£9.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

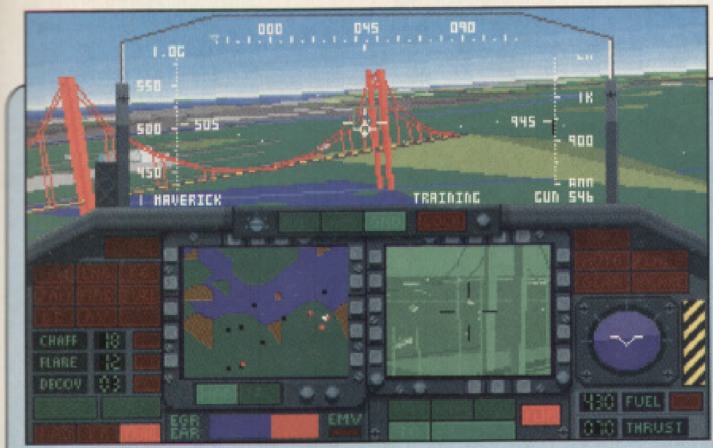
25Mhz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 2Mb of hard disk space and Windows 3.1.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcards.

Overall

71%



F-117A

One of the nice things about the new MicroProse PowerPlus budget range, is that if you're a relative newcomer to PC gaming, you can now get to try all the classic flight sims that shaped modern aerial gaming. And so, after the furious excitement of F-15 Strike Eagle III and Gunship 2000 (still the best chopper sim around for my money), the next gem in the MicroProse back catalogue is the slightly more sedate Stealth Fighter simulator, F-117A Nighthawk.

Although, as you can see, the 3D doesn't boast Gouraud-shading or texture-mapping, the 3D engine is very smooth and the feeling of speed that's created as you zip over buildings, bridges and ships is very realistic. But this doesn't compensate for the fact that F-117A has dated rather badly, despite the fact that the lack of graphic frills means that none of the gameplay and smoothness is lost.

Controlling the F-117A is remarkably easy and rarely do you have to wrestle with the aircraft to keep it in the air. It's a very nimble plane, which can loop, dogfight with interceptors and execute an inverted dive at less than four thousand feet, fully loaded and with room to spare. Impressive stuff, indeed.

It's important that this dogfighting element is fairly exciting, because the very nature of the Stealth Fighter means that, ideally, you get in, drop your bombs and get out as quickly as possible without being seen. In F-117A, it's best to stay undetected for as long as possible and, like captaining a submarine, it doesn't really translate into exciting, action-packed gameplay.

But if it's action you want, the F-117A handles very well in dogfights. It's quite a fun plane to fly because not only can you carry a truck load of ordnance but the cannons are incredibly deadly. You can finish off fighters with one burst of 20mm shells and, in a similar way to F-15 and Tornado, your complement of air-to-air missiles are very accurate.

There are a host of missions to be accomplished from search and destroy sorties to aerial reconnaissance. Most of these take place at night, and they are really quite atmospheric, with tiny pin pricks of lights indicating runways or tips of buildings. The time acceleration facility comes in very useful too, as does the auto pilot, because whatever mission you end up flying, there's still a lot of tedious waypoint flying to complete.

Like any MicroProse flight sim, there are a wealth of comprehensive pre-flight options too, which allow you to determine what level of difficulty you want and what type of mission you want to fly. There are missions which are based on historical events and the briefings include remarkably detailed including maps, and details of possible routes, tactics and loadouts.

After each mission the debriefing session details each incident including the time and location of engagements, any hits and perhaps details of your own watery, earthy or explosive demise.

Unfortunately, the intelligence of the enemy planes isn't the smartest I've seen, but then nor is the program itself. You can shoot down a few of your own planes, punch a few holes in the carrier you took off from and still get a medal.

But, despite the blocky graphics and the dated feel, F-117A is still an enjoyable and challenging game to play. Okay, it's not in the same league as something like TFX and it doesn't have multi-player modem and network options. But it's a good, solid game that will keep you more than occupied. I'd still plump for F-15 III personally, but F-117A is still a lot of fun nonetheless.

POWERPLUS/MICROPROSE

(0276) 684959

£16.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 1Mb RAM and 8Mb of hard disk space.

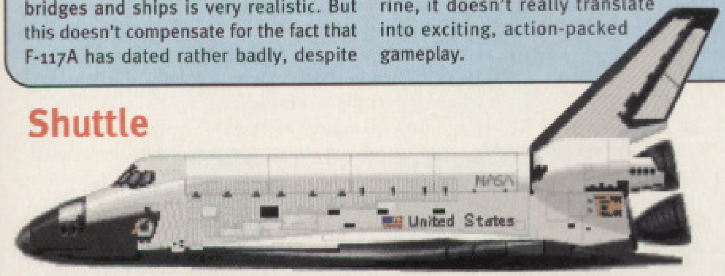
ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; joystick; Sound Blaster, Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

Overall

77%

Shuttle



Shuttle is a simulator in the literal sense of the word — it's thoroughly detailed and totally confusing if you don't take time to sit down with a cup of tea and slowly wade through the instructions. Imagine the control panel of the most complex flight sim you've ever played, now multiply that by ten and that's roughly how many little buttons, dials and switches you've got on the Shuttle control panel. They even include a poster of it!

Obviously, the game is based on the NASA shuttle missions, and the detail is painfully accurate. The manuals are crammed with technical and historical information about the space shuttle and its missions, and you're advised to study them carefully before even attempting to get the blasted thing off of the ground.

When, and indeed if, you eventually do get the shuttle into the air (and only after following dozens of procedures, switching switches and carrying out checks), the flight experience is no less daunting. No, in fact, boring would be a much better word to describe it.

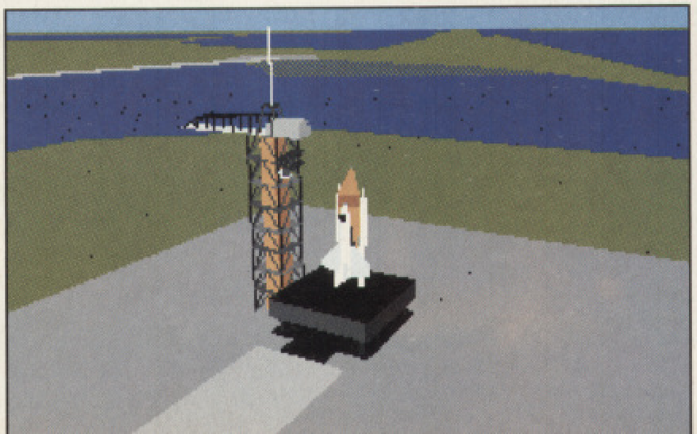
The spacecraft itself, handles like a breeze-block wedged in a vat of jelly and, as for the space missions, which range from launching the Hubble space telescope to deploying space station crew compartments in orbit, they're not exactly fun. Like the Microsoft Space Simulator (reviewed in Issue 5), Shuttle may well be accurate but it's deathly dull and an absolute pig to fly.

Things are not helped by the extremely basic graphics either. The Shuttle is a couple of cylinders attached to a lozenge while the Earth, something that should look stunningly spectacular from orbit, is merely a slowly spinning blue ball with some green blotches on it. To be fair, the control panels are nicely drawn but lots of grey buttons, grey switches and the odd red or green LED light isn't my idea of an exciting display.

As for the sound? Oh dear. A hiss for taking off, a slightly different tone of hiss for cruising in space, yet another hiss for landing and there's also the odd clunk and bump when the mechanical arm dumps million dollar chunks of equipment into space.

To be honest, this isn't really a game at all, it's for space anoraks who are NASA or shuttle fanatics — but even a mere enthusiast would soon tire of it. And who knows how realistic it is? But with Shuttle, who cares? Games are meant for enjoyment and escapism. If they are dull and uneventfully realistic, like this one, then it fails on both counts and becomes something other than a game. It becomes an experience.

So, if you want to enjoy the tedium of real spaceflight, buy Shuttle or the prettier Microsoft Space Simulator. But if you want to enjoy yourself and escape for a while, buy X-Wing, TIE Fighter, Inferno or one of the Wing Commander games. You'll have a lot more fun, believe me.



HIT SQUAD/VEKTOR GRAFIX

(061) 832 6633

£16.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

16Mhz 286, VGA, 1Mb RAM, 4Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Ad Lib and Roland soundcards.

Overall

35%

Yours... *for less than a Fiver*

Once again Dean Evans casts his eye over this months tiny crop of Shareware titles, games that will cost you slightly less than a three-pack of boxer shorts and a packet of Rolos...

One Must Fall

Epic Megagames

The word "Shareware" used to conjure up images of blocky, EGA platform games and stick-man RPGs. But with games like Doom and Wacky Wheels, this "oh, it's been knocked up by some bloke in his garage" view is really no longer applicable. Today's Shareware games now feature 256-colour graphics, four-channel sound effects, digitised speech and CD-quality soundtracks. Of course, there's still the odd home-grown EGA masterpiece floating about, but generally the major Shareware developers are putting out some very impressive stuff indeed.

Epic Megagames is one such company, and after the success of the platform romp Jazz Jackrabbit, its next release is a futuristic beat-'em-up, entitled One Must Fall. Like Rise Of The Robots, OMF pits two huge, robotic fighting machines against each other, but it throws in an extra twist by setting the bouts in an electrified arena — in the registered version there are five different arenas to fight in.

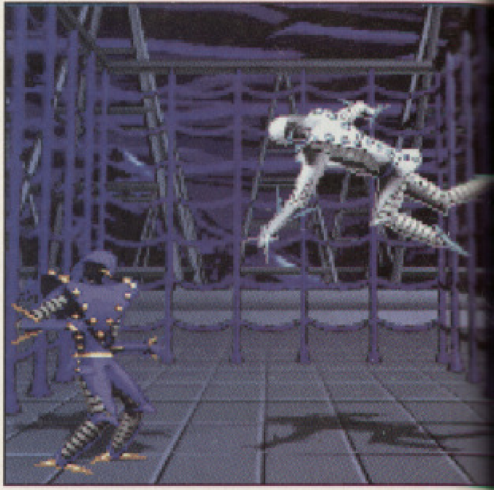
Deep down, it's your typical jump-'n'-thump affair, but for a Shareware game OMF is very impressive. The gameplay can hardly be classed as original, but the robots are nicely animated (if a little slow-moving on some low-end 486 machines) while the gameplay is fast and furious.

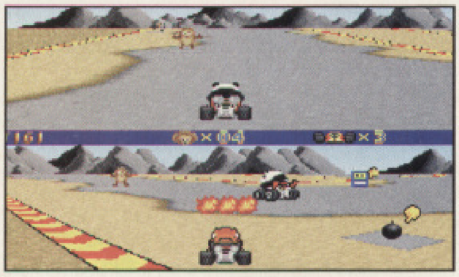
Naturally, you've got your special moves, combination punches, energy bars and a variety of evil-looking metal giants to battle against, and if you can't hang on for Super StreetFighter II, Mortal Kombat II or even the long-awaited Rise Of The Robots, then OMF is a very playable, quality game.

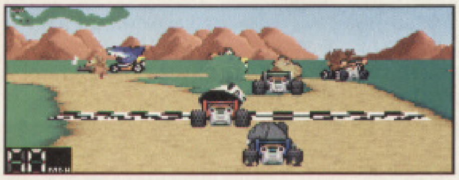
If you're a beat'-em-up fan, give it a try — it pulls down the pants of StreetFighter and bloodies the nose of Mortal Kombat. Great stuff.

● **Contact: Epic Megagames UK (0767) 260903.**

OVERALL 90%







Wacky Wheels

Apogee Software

Ever played Super Mario Kart on the Super NES? Well if you have then you'll have a very good idea of what to expect from Apogee Software's new racing game, Wacky Wheels. If you haven't, and if you missed out on the Wacky Wheels coverdisk in Issue 5 (shame on you), then you probably won't know that the game is a multi-player go-karting spectacular featuring eight lovable animals, fireballs, bombs and a few robot ducks into the bargain. As Dave said two months ago, it's the most fun you can have with your trousers on. But he leads a simple life, does our Dave.

But whether you've got your trousers on or not, Wacky Wheels is much more than just a straightforward racing game and, although it can never hope to rank up there with the Gouraud-shaded excellence of IndyCar Racing, manoeuvring a shark around a racetrack firing hedgehogs at a pelican is actually a hell of a lot of fun. Anything goes in Wacky Wheels, and the aim is to win the races however you can.

Scattered around the race courses are a variety of useful power-ups. There are hedgehogs that you can pick up and fire at other drivers, bombs, speed-up chevrons, and hazards like pools of water and oil that must be carefully avoided. But better still, Wacky Wheels has a great two-player split-screen mode and you can also play head-to-head against a friend over a serial link or a modem.

Wacky Wheels is a racing game that has its tongue firmly wedged in its cheek. The graphics aren't exactly jaw dropping, but Wacky Wheels more than makes up for it with a wealth of gameplay and addictiveness. We recommend this game highly.

● **Contact: Transend Services Ltd (0274) 622228.**

OVERALL 86%

Where can I get this lovely **Shareware?**

If you're on the look-out for Shareware, here's a list of just some of the friendly and helpful Shareware libraries that you might like to try. Why not ask them to send you a catalogue of their games, or alternatively check this very magazine for adverts.

Transend Services Ltd
(0274) 622228
Testware UK Ltd
(0423) 886415
PD Soft
(0702) 4669

Shareware libraries often charge different prices for the same games so try to shop around to find the best deal.

You'll usually find that you'll pay by the disk, not by the game. This means that if one disk costs £2 then a game like Raptor (which comes on three disks) will set you back £6. Postage & Packing is normally included and, if it isn't, go somewhere where it is.

If you've got a modem, why not try giving the following BBS systems a call. Initial on-line time is free but for more access most systems will charge you an annual subscription fee.

After Hours BBS (0785) 228214
On-Line BBS (0839) 661199/88/77

These games are also available on Compuserve and the Internet.

Going on-line with **CompuServe**

If you have a PC and suitable communications software, you can log onto CompuServe immediately. CompuServe's London dial-up node accepts all modem speeds up to 14,400bps and can be reached by dialing (071) 490 8881. Simply dial this number and type in the following responses to the system requests:

HOST NAME: CIS
USER ID: 177000,5606
PASSWORD: EXPLORE/WORLD
AGREEMENT NUMBER: UKPCGAME
SERIAL NUMBER: 93006

If you have any problems, simply call CompuServe's Freephone helpline on (0800) 289458.

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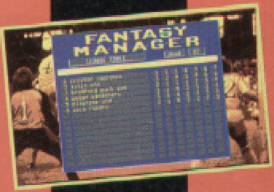

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power up

This month's tip-fest includes the conclusion of our guide to Desert Strike, the first chunk of our solution to Origin's System Shock and a brill "How To Be A Git" handbook for Transport Tycoon. But we kick off with...

Little Big Adventure

You've been slapped in jail, you've got no weapons, and some bloke called Sendell keeps telling you that you're the chosen one. What else can you do but solve Little Big Adventure...?

Jailbreak!

As the game begins you'll be languishing in Dr Funfrock's maximum security prison on Citadel Island. Thankfully, escaping is the easy part, and the jailbreak is a gentle introduction to all the moves that you're going to need to masterin order to succeed later on in the game.

In your cell, press F3 to enter Aggressive mode and wait for the guard to descend on the lift. Dispatch him with a couple of punches and then stand on the lift, waiting as it rises and carries you out. Don't worry if you miss the coin that the guard gives up when you kill him – there will be plenty more to collect later in the game.

As the lift comes to rest, attack the guard standing nearest to the alarm button. You've only got a few moments to overcome him before he sounds the alert and the Supergros appear with their homing stun-bombs. If all goes well, attack the remaining nurse and grab the key that he drops when he vanishes. Slip back into Normal mode and head down the steps for the door.

Once through the door, choose Discreet mode and creep around the corner, avoiding the guard that's patrolling the courtyard. Enter the room on the right and walk behind the dressing screen to take the guard's clothes. Now search every locker for health and Kashes until you find your ID card and your Holomap.

Now, safely disguised, walk into the courtyard and beat up the guard. Next head north again, into the second room, and kill the nurse standing there. Again search everything to find Kashes and health to replenish your energy bar.

Finally, walk out of the room, up the staircase and into the prison control room. Quickly walk behind the guard standing next to the alarm button and kill him. Dispatch the nurse to get the door key and then finally exit to the outside world.

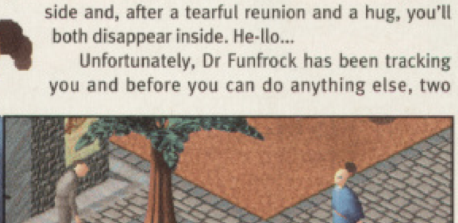
Absolute Rubbish

To escape from the prison grounds you've got to use the old "Hide in the back of the garbage truck" ploy. Sneak past the sentry post using Discreet mode and then, still in Discreet mode, stand on the rubbish pile and press Space.

After the truck has dumped you at the Citadel Island tip, enter the nearby building and talk to the Rabbibunny. Search the chest to get some Kashes and then head south into the main part of the town.

After you've had a preliminary look around Citadel Island (carefully avoiding any military entanglements, I might add), head south and south again until you find your house. Your girlfriend, Zoe, will be standing outside and, after a tearful reunion and a hug, you'll both disappear inside. He-llo...

Unfortunately, Dr Funfrock has been tracking you and before you can do anything else, two Groboclones appear, arrest Zoe and knock you out with one of those damned annoying homing bombs. There's nothing you can do about it, I'm afraid, and when you awake you'll find yourself back in jail.



Back On The Chain Gang

Escape from your prison cell in exactly the same way as before but, when you get into the locker room, search the locker where you first found the Holomap to retrieve all your earlier possessions. Once you've made it out again and jumped out of the garbage truck, head south and stand on the hill above the town.

Nearby you will see a grating that leads down to the sewers. Stand on it (in Normal mode) and press Space to descend into the darkness. In the sewer, pick up the empty clover leaf box – this will allow you to gain an extra life – and collect all the mushrooms to replenish your health.

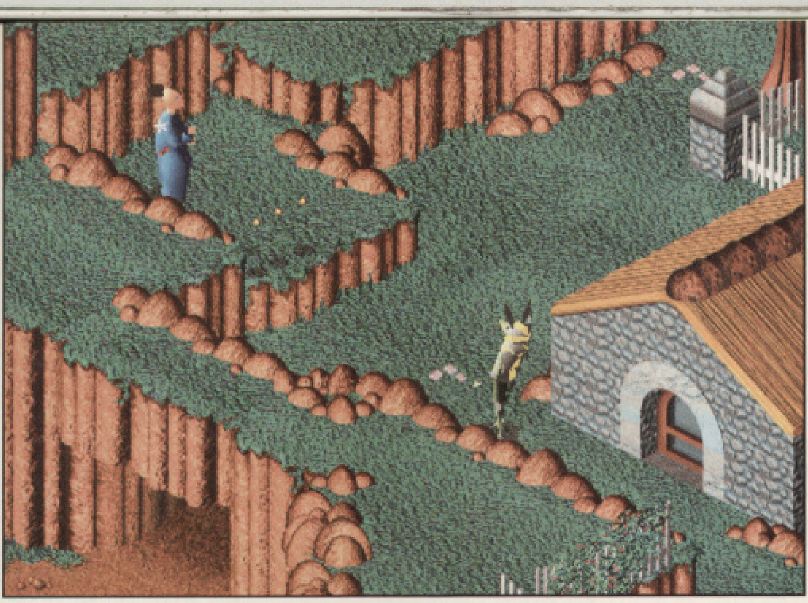
Pop back up to ground level and have a wander around the city. Remember to be careful to avoid the sentries, because they'll be immediately suspicious of you as you're wearing a nurse's uniform. Generally speaking, try to search everything that you see, notably flower pots, litter bins, cupboards, chests and lockers, to find health power-ups and Kashes – you'll need lots of money later on in the game.

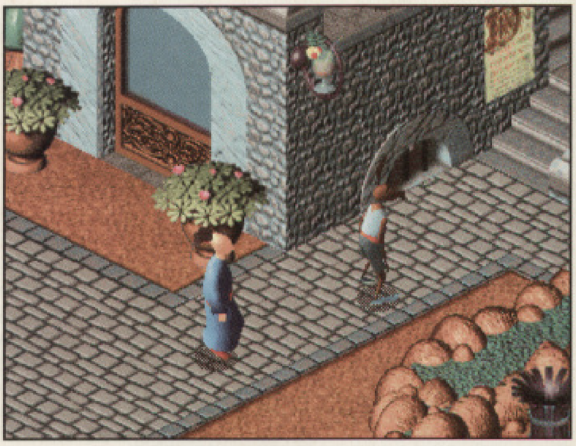
If you've read the earlier posters, you'll know that Dr Funfrock is testing a new surveillance device and this, you'll soon discover, is the yellow/green lawnmower-type robot (pictured left) that seems to have a set of green binoculars on it. When you encounter this annoying device, stand perfectly still because the robot is only programmed to fire at people if they are moving.

It's Good To Talk

Talking to the townsfolk, and indeed anybody that you come across, is vital if you want to progress in LBA. After Zoe has been captured, your opening gambit will be something like "I'm looking for a young girl. She is being escorted by two Groboclones." Talk to everyone that you see (apart from Funfrock's soldiers, of course) and they will point you in the direction of the tavern.

The tavern is located on the screen patrolled by the surveillance robot. It's over on the right-hand side (top-right picture),





next to the ocean and, once you've found it, nip inside to talk to the landlord. Almost everybody will be totally unhelpful but, when you ask the Grobo sitting at the table upstairs, he offers to tell you if you buy him a drink. You should have picked up more than enough money by now, so talk to the athletic Rabbibunny to order the elephant a tongue-loosening shandy.

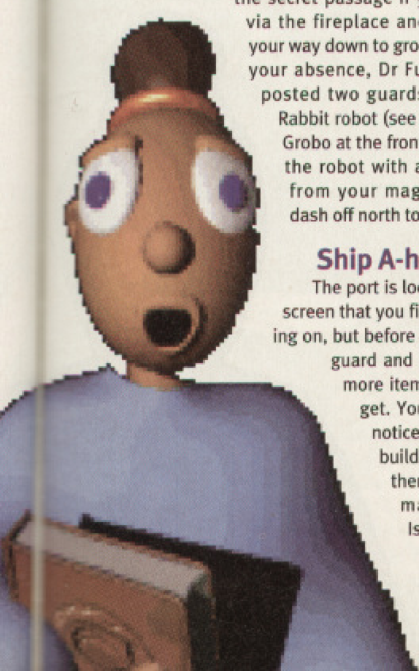
The Grobo tells you that he saw Zoe being taken to the port, so leave the tavern and head south again towards your house. Okay, so this is nowhere near the port, I know, but you're starting to look a bit conspicuous in your nurse's outfit and it's time to pick up the weapon that you left in your house.

Evicted!

When you return to your house, you'll discover that the entrance has been bricked up, so wander around to see the Rabbibunny who owns the house next to yours. Apparently he's an architect and he tells you that his son recently fixed your chimney, but unfortunately he didn't have time to seal it.

Using Athletic mode, jump up onto the grass behind your house and make your way upwards towards the chimney entrance. Drop down into your fireplace and search everything that you see for Kashes and those little read health hearts. In the room with the sketching easel, open the cupboard to get your magic tunic and your ball of power. Once you've got these, search everything again, to find blue magic bottles which will power-up your magical energy bar.

After you've searched the house (don't worry about the secret passage if you find it), leave via the fireplace and carefully make your way down to ground level again. In your absence, Dr Funfrock will have posted two guards; a rather nasty Rabbit robot (see top picture) and a Grobo at the front of the house. Kill the robot with a couple of shots from your magic ball and then dash off north towards the port.



Ship A-hoy!

The port is located on the same screen that you find the sewer grating on, but before you knock out the guard and leave, there's one more item that you need to get. You'll probably have noticed that most of the buildings are shut, but there is a handy pharmacy on Citadel Island and the door is always open. Sadly, however, the local chemist is a dirty, low-down, informing rat and, as soon as he sees you, he'll raise the alarm. Before the Clone arrives, run round past the cash till and kill him with either your fists or the ball, and then dash back out of the building to avoid the clone. Once outside, nip back into the shop again and the Clone will be gone, so grab the bottle of Syrup, rifle through the till and then head towards the port.

To get to the port you're going to have to knock out the guard and, once you've done this, knock out the Grobo that guards the gate to the port. Pick up the key that he drops. You are forced into this course of action, because if you try to buy a ticket legally at the Ferry ticket office, the salesman will recognise you immediately and raise the alarm.

Once through the gate, talk to the depressed elephant on the dock, move his crates around for him (it's a simple sliding block puzzle) and grab the ferry ticket that he gives you as a reward. Now wander towards the captain in his natty little sailor suit, and board the ferry for Principal Island.

And after this gentle start, we'll come fully up to speed in LBA next month, tackling Principal Island, The White Leaf Desert and the hidden temple. Don't you go away now.

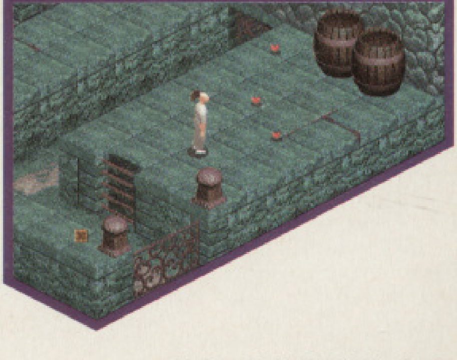
Ball-*Blazing*

The best way to use the magic ball of power in the early stages of the game is to stand slightly off-screen and throw it at the very edge of your range. Obviously, this tactic is only really effective when your magical energy bar is at full strength, so if it drops too low, nip onto another screen and search for magical power-ups.

Although your fists are still useful for battling unarmed nurses and scientists, you'll find that you have to use the ball effectively to deal with the Grobos and the Guards.

Who Wants To Be *A Millionaire?*

One of the neatest things about LBA is how each room resets when you leave it. For example, if you search your house and grab all the hearts, Kashes and magic bottles, you can leave (wait for the screen fade, etc), then enter the house once more, and collect them all again. This tactic becomes useful when your health or magical energy has fallen to a low level and, of course, if you're in desperate need of some extra money.



System *Shock*

You've got nothing but a cyber-implant and a headache to help you defeat the rogue computer in System Shock, but PC GAMES is here, with Part One of the definitive guide to Origin's space-age RPG.

Fighting insane computers can be hard work, and System Shock is no different. You have to figure out exactly what's going on, form a strategy to defeat Shodan, and survive to carry it out. The first level is a gentle run through of all the things you can expect later on in the game, as well as containing plenty of clues as to where to go next and what to do.

First of all, it's important to get the game's interface sussed, which is no mean feat in itself. Try holding the mouse in your right hand, using it for clicking icons and manipulating objects. Use your left hand to move around, with your fingers on the cursor keys and your little finger on the CTRL key, so that you can look up and down or lean left or right easily. After a while, you'll be moving and fighting at the same time, saving vital seconds when you get ambushed.

General rules for all Shockers are as follows:

(1) Pick up only what is useful. Ignore beakers, fire extinguishers and 'Craze' drug packs, but take weapons (one of each only), ammo, grenades, other drug packs, access cards, and any funky bits of technology. If in doubt, pick it up and then throw it away.

(2) Some of the best items are concealed on corpses, either human or cyborg. Search them and any containers (briefcases, flasks, etc) thoroughly.

(3) Always solve a circuit problem when you find it. All sorts of good things happen when you do.

(4) Don't be afraid of Cyberspace. Jack in to this digital world as often as possible — each terminal offers an opportunity to get data, open locked doors, or at least upgrade your cyber-software. A failed trip to Cyberspace is unlikely to kill you, so give it a go. Get familiar with the new movement directions and the wire-frame landscape on the first level, where things are particularly easy.

(5) Tranquillisers and stunguns are for wimps, so use a real weapon. You can bet the enemy will — the locations of all the weapons are marked on the handy System Shock map below.

(6) Wipe out security cameras and Shodan's power couplings when you find them.

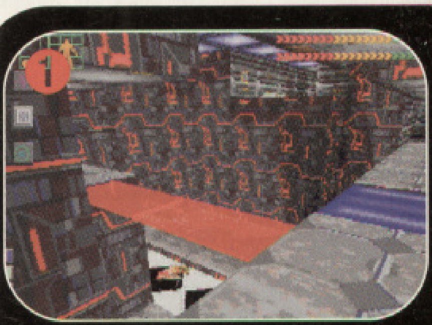
Level *One*

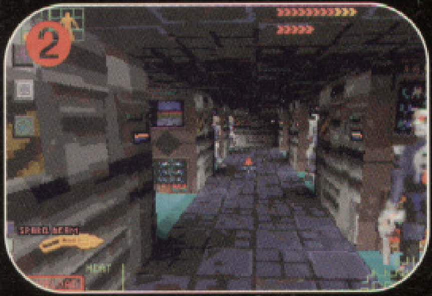
Okay, it's time to get serious. When you start off, you'll be in the Med-Bay area with three Serv-Bots. Crush them with the lead pipe that you find, and then use the surgery machine and the energy column to get replenish your health and energy.

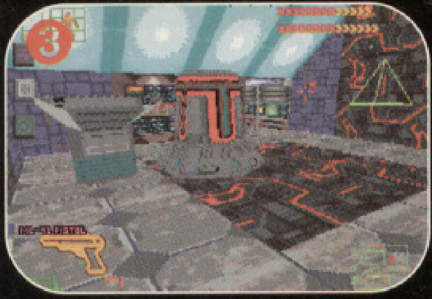
Outside the Med-Bay (the door combination is 451) you'll start the game for real, with the first mutants. Plug them full of darts (see the map for the location of the dart gun), clear out the immediate area (solving the simple circuit puzzle for more light), and then head north towards the Med-Lab Cyberspace terminal, where you can get plenty of basic cyber-software and open various security doors. Afterwards you'll have access to the Magpulse (see the map), so don't forget to pick that up. It's a fine piece of kit that you'll need on the later levels.

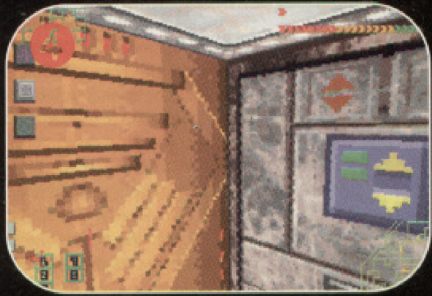
Next, go east to the central area, clearing out the main corridor and Beta block (on the eastern side). Watch for the Hopper as you go. Inside the central viewing area itself you'll find screens where you can view a couple of important locations.

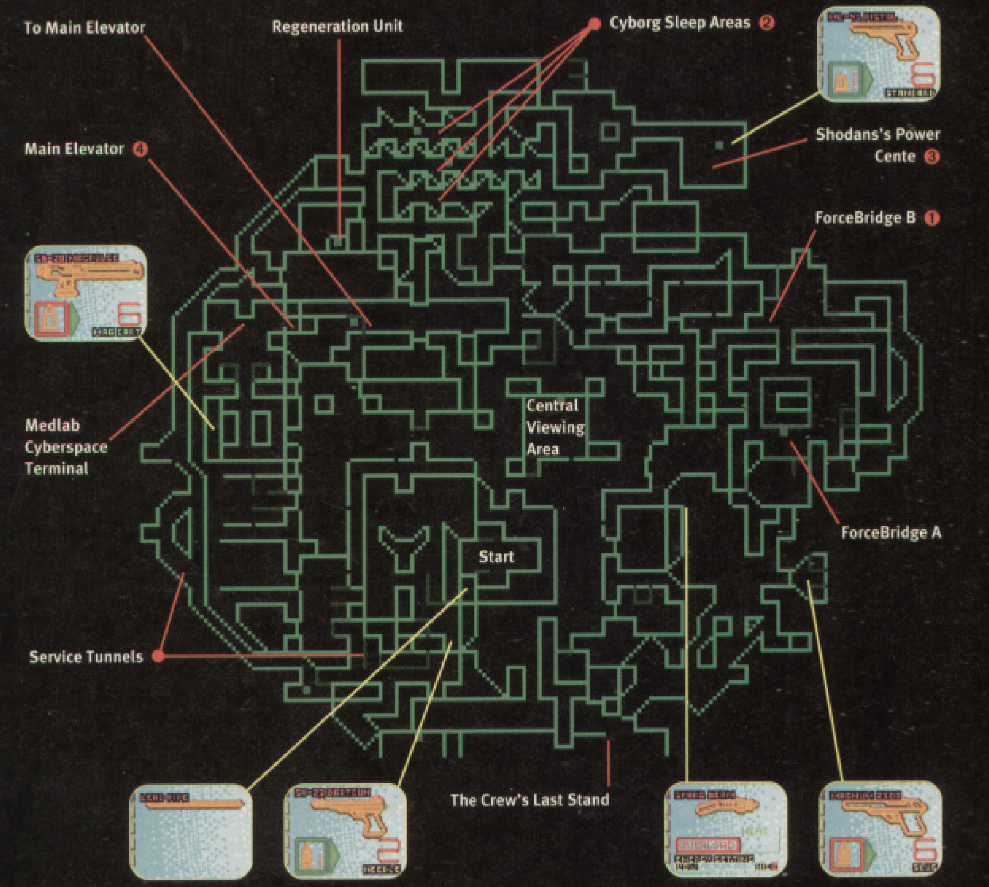
Again, clearing out rooms as you go, move on south towards the location where the crew made their last

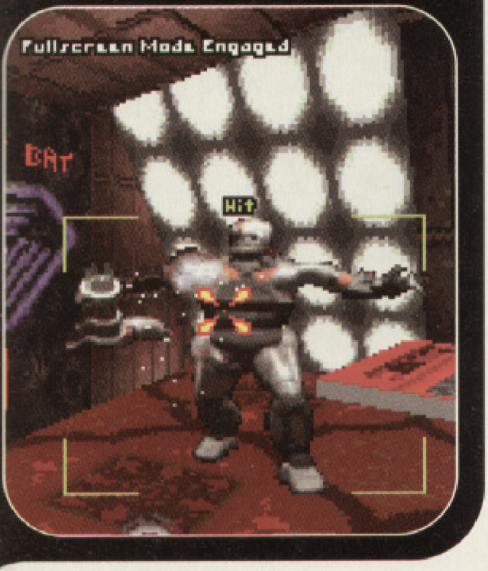












stand. By reading all the E-mail messages that you find, you should have a good idea of what's happened by now. Unless you're desperately low on health, leave the service tunnels alone for the moment.

To the north of the crew's last stand is a Cyborg Assassin and some mutants. Watch your step here, since the assassin is cunningly placed to catch a nonchalant adventurer off guard. Your reward is a Sparq gun, which is an effective weapon on this level since there are several energy columns to recharge it at.

As far as health goes, be careful. Try not to use medi kits or patches if possible, because you'll need them on later levels, but you shouldn't compromise and let yourself get too low on health. You haven't activated the regeneration unit yet, so if your health drops to zero, then you're a gonner.

Now's a good time to make your way back to the Med-Bay to use the surgery machine, although I suggest using the short-cut through the service tunnels. If you solved that first circuit diagram back at the beginning then there'll be a lift active between the service area and the area by the med bay. Watch out for the Repair-Bot, though.

After charging up, you can return to the crew's last stand, clearing up the service tunnels on the way. Moving north, you'll find another circuit diagram which, when solved, activates force bridge A. Try not to fall into the chasm, since it's radioactive down there — not fatal radiation, but dangerous enough to sap your health all the same.

From there it's only a small jaunt to force bridge B and another assassin. The switch to activate the force bridge is up the ramp ahead of you when you first enter the area. Now you're well and truly inside Shodan's territory. Expect a few mutants and plenty of cyborgs from now on.

Follow the passage on the other side of the force bridge, checking each corner for the enemy as you go. The whole northern section of the level, including the sleep areas and especially the power centre, need to be carefully and thoroughly searched.

When you knock out the main power blocks you'll get an irate message from Shodan, and a large mob of thuggish drones will descend on you. Hold your ground, wipe them out and move on.

Your main objective now is to activate the regeneration unit — just in case you bite the big one in the closing stages of the level — and to make your way to the main elevator. You've nearly finished the level now, but you can do better yet. Instead of leaving, go through the bulkhead doors by the main elevator. This leads back to the corridor outside the Med-Lab Cyberspace area. From here, it's only a short walk round the corner back to the location where you started, and a free healing with the surgery machine. You can power up at the energy column, too.

When you're all powered up, now's the time to do the tour of the level again. If you've knocked out Shodan's security to 0%, then you'll find that previously locked doors can now be opened. And the only opposition you'll encounter is from mutants, who repopulate the main sections when you discover the main elevator. This mopping up phase allows you to check any nooks and crannies you missed the first time round (check your map for holes). You should come away with the Magnum, a very fine weapon for those tough enough to survive shoot-outs (see the map).

And there you have it, round one to the person with the cyber-implant. The level's over. It's time to face the elevator music and move on to Level 2. Stay tuned, we'll continue the guide next month.

Crash, *Bang, Wallop*

You'll come across plenty of nasties out there on the first level of System Shock. Since some of them are nastier nasties than others, we thought we'd give you the full low-down on how to get the better of them all in combat. The first of these are...

Serv-Bots

Short and not particularly aggressive, you'll find a few Serv-Bots in the Med-Bay at the start of the level. To attack them, I suggest looking down a bit to keep them in sight as they close, and then smacking them with the lead pipe. It feels a bit like beating up R2D2, but they quickly crumple under your blows, wimper, and short circuit as they hit the ground.

Human Mutants

Found in abundance all over the level, these guys are best despatched with a couple of shots to the head from your dart gun. If you stay out of the range of their claws they can't hurt you. You're faster and more manoeuvrable, which should keep you out of trouble even against a mass attack.

Cyborg Drones

You'll meet your first drones as you approach the central area. They're slow, but are the first opponents which shoot bullets at you. In the early stages use four shots from the dart gun to down them, but when you have the Sparq, switch to that. On full power, it'll fry a drone first time.

Cyborg Assassins

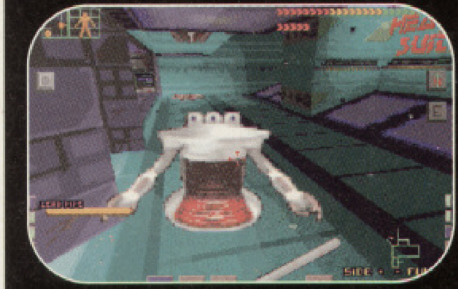
Skulking around various parts of the complex are several assassins. Think of them as faster, meaner drones. Given half a chance they'll get a few hits on you before you can even react, so be ready with the Sparq at maximum power. Without the Sparq, use hit and run tactics with the dartgun. The best weapon's the pistol with teflon ammo, but you won't find that until near the end of the level. Bear it in mind for later levels, though.

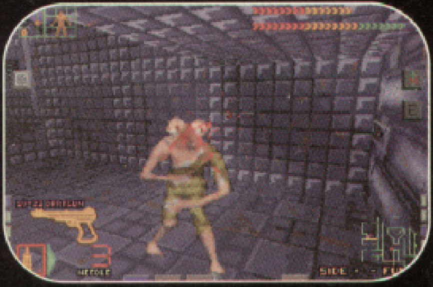
Repair-Bot

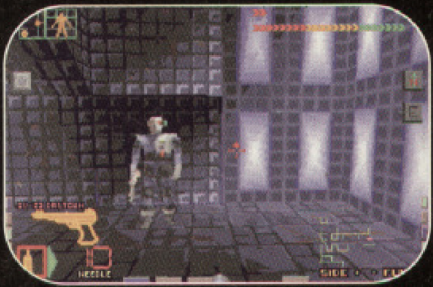
This is one pesky devil. An armoured little scorpion droid with a powerful sting, it's quick and deadly. There's only one here, hiding in the service tunnel area. When you find it, look at your feet (it's too small to see any other way) and Sparq it. The dartgun's as good as useless, so without the Sparq, run away and grenade it from a distance.

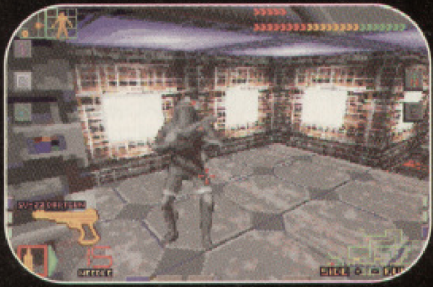
Cyborg Warrior

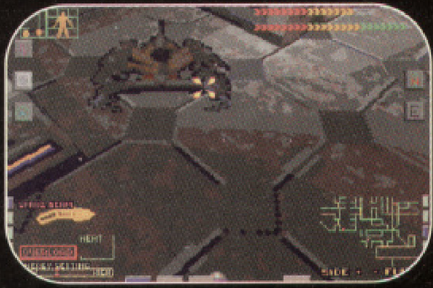
A sign of things to come, the warrior is deep in the northern half of the level, the part controlled by Shodan's units. He's on a platform, but may not see you when you first see him. My advice is, frag him if you're good with grenades or Magpulse him. If you're really handy with the Sparq and have a bit of health left at this stage, then you might try slugging it out with him.

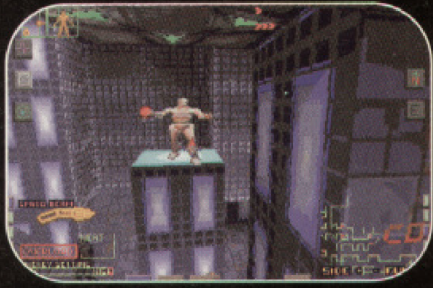








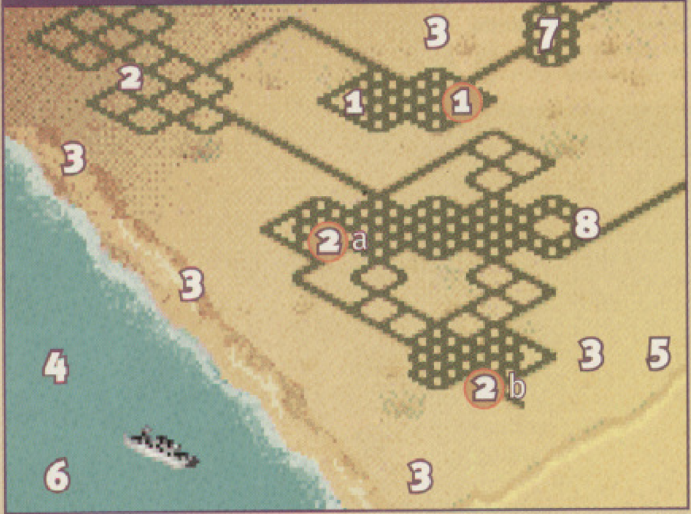




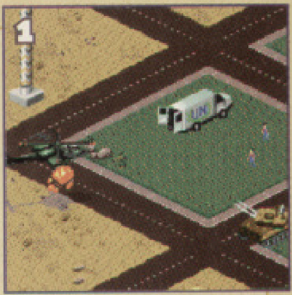
When the going gets tough, the tough read Power Up! And the going doesn't get much tougher than in Missions Three and Four of Gremlin's excellent sandy shoot-'em-up...

Desert Strike

Mission Three: Embassy City



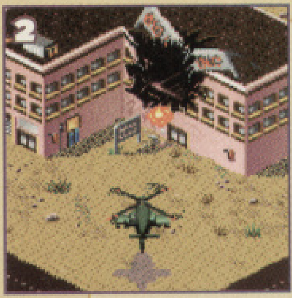
Objective One: UN Inspectors



The inspectors are guarded by a ZSU and two infantrymen, one of whom bears a rocket launcher. Approach from the south, because the low buildings there will offer you brief protection from the ZSU. Quickly take out the ZSU with two Hellfires and then kill Mr Rocket Launcher with another Hellfire.

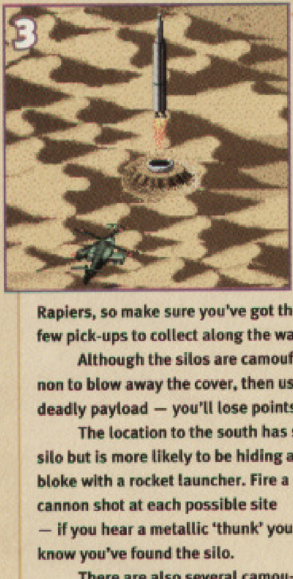
Pick off the last infantryman with the cannon, and then start winching up the UN inspectors. You must rescue at least five of the six inspectors, so take care not to kill the two standing outside the van while you're blasting the enemy. Fly south-west and drop them off at the nearby in-land landing site.

Objective Two: Bio Weapons



The weapons labs are weakly protected by just three VDAs — seek them out and destroy them with Hydras. The location of the chief scientist is random, so there's nothing for it but to blow up each building in turn until you find him. Use a Hellfire and four Hydras to demolish each lab (you can afford to be a bit wreckless with the missiles here, because there's an ammo pick-up nearby, and plenty more to come in the next couple of objectives). Make sure you don't kill the scientists by mistake — you never know which one's the chief.

Objective Three: Missile Silos



You only have to destroy four of the five missile silos to complete this objective, so ignore the one out of the way to the north. Instead, head to the nearest silo (just west of the labs) and work your way down the coast, smashing silos as you go and pausing only to drop off the scientists at the coastal landing site (thus replenishing your armour). Then head inland to destroy the silo to the south-east.

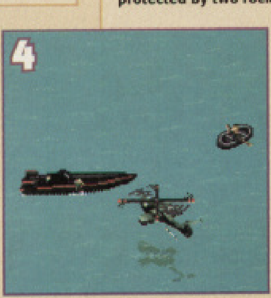
Each silo is heavily protected, the first two by a pair of ZSUs and the rest by an assortment of ZSUs, M48s and Rapiers, so make sure you've got the ammo and armour to deal with them. Luckily there are quite a few pick-ups to collect along the way, so you needn't worry too much .

Although the silos are camouflaged as sand dunes, they're fairly easy to spot. Use your cannon to blow away the cover, then use two Hellfires to destroy the silos before they can launch their deadly payload — you'll lose points if the missiles get away.

The location to the south has several camouflaged areas, any of which could be concealing a silo but is more likely to be hiding a bloke with a rocket launcher. Fire a cannon shot at each possible site — if you hear a metallic 'thunk' you know you've found the silo.

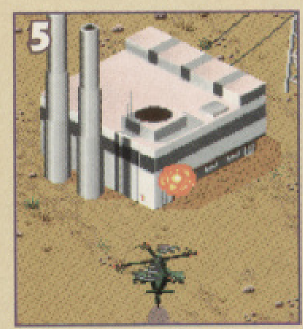
There are also several camouflaged areas at the south-east location, but it's worth blowing all these open as they conceal a treasure trove of goodies — including an extra life pick-up! However, be on your guard for a couple of men with rocket launchers lying in hiding.

Objective Four: Lost At Sea

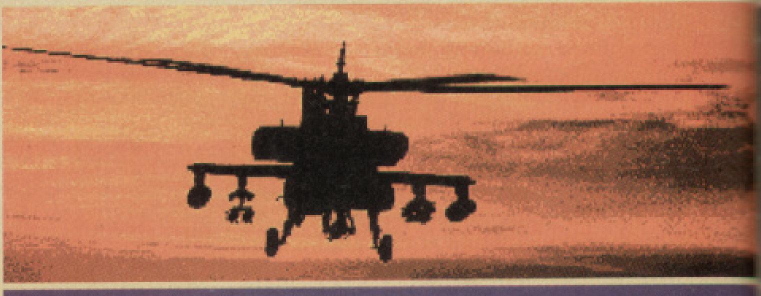


You only need to rescue two seamen to complete this objective. Each seaman is protected by two rocket-launching speedboats. Keep moving and they won't be able to get a bead on you, and you can then take them out at your leisure with a couple of Hellfires. Remember to drop off the seamen at the landing zone before heading on.

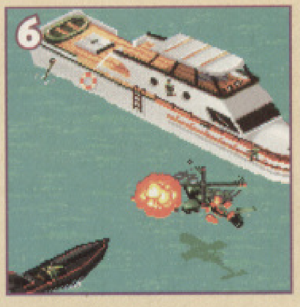
Objective Five: Power Station



The power station is lightly defended by just three Rapier sites. However, if you're not careful they can still give you a fair old pasting. Approach directly from the north or the south, in order to use the station as partial cover, and destroy each Rapier with a Hellfire missile. Use Hydras and cannon fire to blow up the power station and complete the objective.



Objective Six: Madman's Yacht

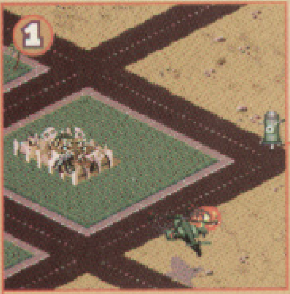


The yacht is protected by a chopper, a speedboat and two infantrymen standing on the yacht. Keep moving all the time — jinking left and right, moving backwards and forwards — to prevent the enemy taking aim properly, then use Hellfires to destroy first the chopper, then the speedboat.

Pick off the infantrymen with your cannon, then use Hydras to blow a hole in the side of the yacht. POWs will then leap out into the water, who you should pick up as quickly as possible otherwise they'll drown.

While all this is going on, the evil General Kilbaba will attempt to make good his escape in a speedboat. Don't bother even trying to chase him, because his boat's too fast to catch and too well-armoured to destroy in the limited time available. Don't worry, though — you'll get a chance to get him later. Instead, concentrate on dealing with the two new rocket-launching speedboats which will have turned up. Use Hellfires to destroy them, then carry on rescuing the POWs.

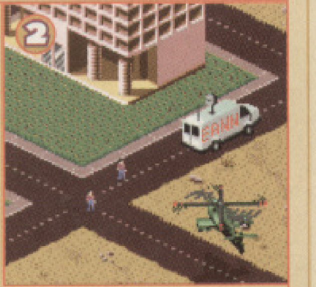
Unless your armour is *very* low, ignore the infantrymen who will appear on the yacht's deck and fire at you — instead of wasting time trying to shoot them, you're better off winching more floundering POWs to safety. They can then be traded in for armour points at the nearby coastal landing zone.



Bonus Objective One: Find The High-Speed Winch!

The high-speed winch is located in the building shown here — and in this mission you really need it! Pick it up as soon as you start, just before attempting to rescue the UN inspectors.

Bonus Objective Two: Rescue The EANN Team!



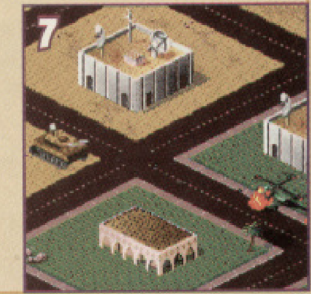
There's an EANN news team stranded at location (a), who are being plagued by a roaming ZSU. Destroy the ZSU with two Hellfires (make sure that you don't catch any buildings in the crossfire, or you'll lose points for killing civilians), rescue the EANN team, and then deliver them to the EANN HQ landing pad at location (b) for a big points and armour bonus.

This, however, is not *quite* as easy as it sounds, because there's an M48, a Rapier, an AAA and two infantrymen in the vicinity of the HQ. The best tactic is to fly in from the south, use your cannon on the infantryman on the building roof, then veer west and take out the AAA with Hydras. Now fly north-west, taking out the M48 with a couple of Hellfires, the Rapier with one Hellfire and, finally, the infantryman with the cannon.

Objective Seven: Enemy Amabassador

Approach the location of the Ambassador's HQ from the south — you'll find a radar site, protected by a Rapier and a man with a rocket launcher, which you should destroy.

Now fly around and approach the HQ from the east. There's a ZSU, an M48 and a VDA protecting the four command centres — with a bit of clever dodging and weaving you can get the haphazardly-firing fools to destroy most of the buildings for you. Be careful when you blow up the building to the north-west — there's yet another missile-lobbing M48 hidden inside.



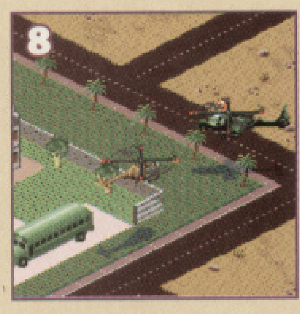
The Ambassador is in the central building — winch him up as soon as you see him, because if he gets killed you'll have to restart the whole mission.

Objective Eight: Power Station

Before starting this objective, make sure you're fully stocked up with fuel, ammo and armour — luckily, the command centres that you had to destroy in the previous objective should have helped you out there.

The embassy is protected by three Rapier sites and three choppers. Approach from the north-west, using Hellfires to destroy the chopper and the Rapier you encounter. Move around the embassy to the south and destroy the Rapier there, then work your way north, destroying any enemy forces you come across, until it's safe to land.

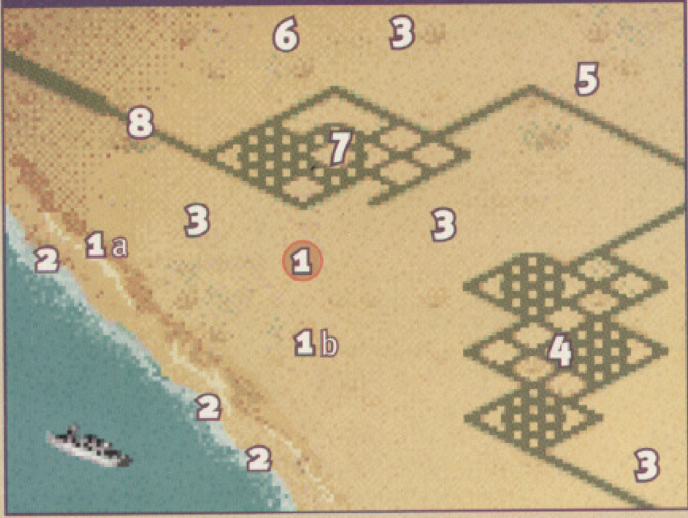
As soon as your co-pilot enters the building, more choppers will appear — destroy them with Hellfires. The bus will first head west briefly, then north, then west again, and finally south. Whenever possible, try to fly well in front of the bus, so that you can blast any enemy vehicles or roadblocks in the way. Doing this will also prevent the bus getting caught in crossfire — it can only take a few hits, and if it blows up you'll have to restart the mission again. Once the bus has reached the transport plane, return to the frigate for a pat on the back.



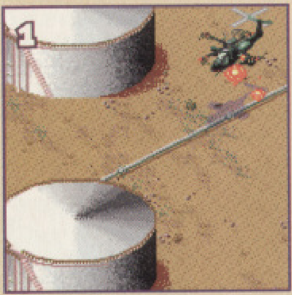
Wot? No MIAS?

Unlike the previous two missions, in Missions Three and Four there are no troops lost in the battlefield for you to rescue for armour bonuses. However, many of the smaller buildings contain extra armour pick-ups so, if you're getting a little battle-scarred, head for the nearest built-up area and blow up a few buildings. But take care not to accidentally destroy the bigger buildings, like hotels or tower blocks, or you'll be penalised for killing civilians. (Take care that these buildings don't get caught in the crossfire either, because you'll still have to forfeit points even if the enemy was responsible for destroying them.)

Mission Four: Nuclear Storm



Objective One: Oil Fields



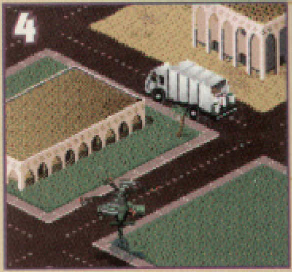
Your targets for Objectives One and Two are in roughly the same vicinity, with two oil pipes near the oil fields and the other near the commando pick-up point. In the interests of conserving fuel it's best to tackle both Objectives simultaneously, so read the tips regarding Objective Two before continuing.

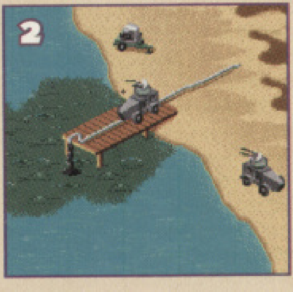
The blue dots on the map indicate the positions of patrolling ZSUs, all of which have to be destroyed before you can airlift in the commandoes. Act quickly, and try not to catch the storage tanks in a crossfire — if too many are destroyed, you'll have to restart the mission. Nearly a dozen ZSUs must be eliminated in all, so you'll be needing to find an ammo pick-up about half-way through.

Once the area is totally cleared of ZSUs, find some fuel and then head for location (a). Pick up the six commandoes, then take them to the drop-off point at location (b) to complete the objective.

Objective Two: Stop Oil Spills

Each oil outlet is heavily protected. The southern-most pipe is guarded by two VDAs and an AAA while the middle outlet is protected by two ZSUs and a man with a rocket launcher. Lastly, you'll find two rocket-launching speedboats near the northern-most pipe.





Unless you've got a co-pilot who's a bit nifty on the gun controls, it's easy to waste a lot of missiles in your fumbling attempts to lock off the oil flow — you have to hit the very tip of the pipe to have any effect. To find the correct position, use your cannon and move around until you hear an explosion sound, then lit rip with your Hydras.

Objective Three: Rescue Hostages

First head for the shelter that lies between the two road networks. Once there, take out the M48s with Hellfires, then use your cannon on the stairwell to free the hostages. Pick them up and take them to the nearest landing zone.

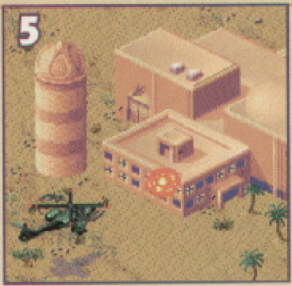
Head north-east and you'll soon come across a road, and a DANGER ZONE sign should flash up. Follow the road around to the right and you'll soon encounter a radar site — destroy it to help make Objective Five easier. Fly north to the top of the map and then fly right again until you come across another radar site, which you should also destroy.

Replenish your ammo and fuel if needed, then head west to the next shelter. Here you'll find two dug-in ZSUs. Use two Hydras to blow away their cover, then use two Hellfires on each to destroy them. Deliver the rescued hostages at the landing zone to the east.

Again, stock up on fuel and ammo if required, then head south to the next shelter, which you should deal with in the same way as the one before. Finally, fly to the far south and carry out the same procedure there — this shelter is protected by just one dug-in ZSU, so it's a breeze to beat.

Objective Four: Destroy Bomb Parts

Fly north-west, following the road near the last shelter. You should soon encounter an M48 — destroy it as soon as possible with a couple of Hellfires. The bomb parts are being carried around this southern built-up area in rubbish trucks. However, some of them are 'decoy' trucks, and if you destroy more than two of them by mistake you'll have to restart the mission. Check out the status screen to find out how to tell them apart, and never attack a truck until you've confirmed its contents. As you fly around the area, locating the trucks, blow up any buildings you see — you should find loads of bonus goodies, including armour repairs and two extra lives!



Objective Five: Power Station

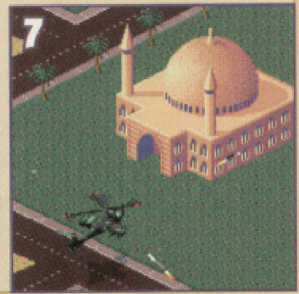
The nuclear weapons plant is heavily guarded by five Crotales, but they're quite slow-firing and, provided you took out the two radar stations earlier on, they shouldn't prove too troublesome — just remember to get in your shots between theirs. The best angle of attack is from the south-east, taking out the Crotale there, then working your way around the buildings, first going west, then north.

After you've cleared the area, blow up ALL the buildings, especially the cooling tower which contains an armour pick-up. Oh, and don't forget to winch up the scientist — you'll find him hiding in the building to the south.

Objective Seven: Destroy Kilbaba's Palace

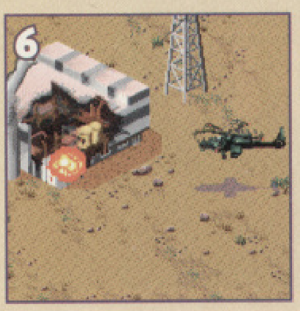
This is a toughy, so make sure you're fully prepared to deal with it. You'll need a lot of ammo, so make sure you know where you can get more — if you're desperate, there's a lone Crotale at a T-junction near the power station which contains an ammo pick-up. The Crotales around the palace also contain ammo pick-ups, and there's an extra life in the building to the north of the palace.

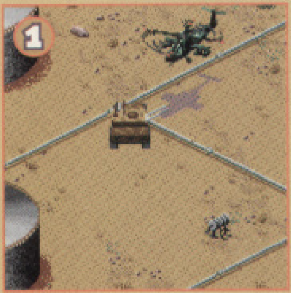
Once you've destroyed everything (including the palace), land and let your co-pilot do his stuff — namely getting taken hostage by Kilbaba's men.



Objective Six: Destroy Power Station

Drop off the scientist at the nearest landing zone, restock your ammo and fuel, then head for the power station. This is protected by four M48s. After you've taken care of them, blow up the station, pick up the spoils (extra ammo and armour) then head on.





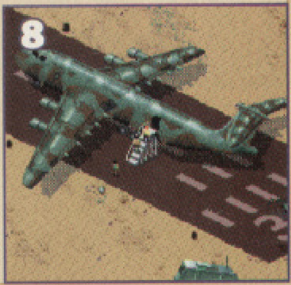
Objective Eight: Prevent Kilbaba's Escape

Head straight from the palace to the runway, where the bomber and the ATV will be waiting. Dealing with this can be tricky, as there's a big risk that you might kill your co-pilot by mistake.

As you approach the plane, use a Hydra to kill the bloke with a rocket launcher next to the ATV, then position yourself to the north of the plane and keep firing until a hole appears in its fuselage.

Stop firing and pick up the man standing on the wing — he's your co-pilot. Now carry on blasting away with everything you've got — it's vital that the plane doesn't take off or Kilbaba will escape, and all your struggles will have been in vain.

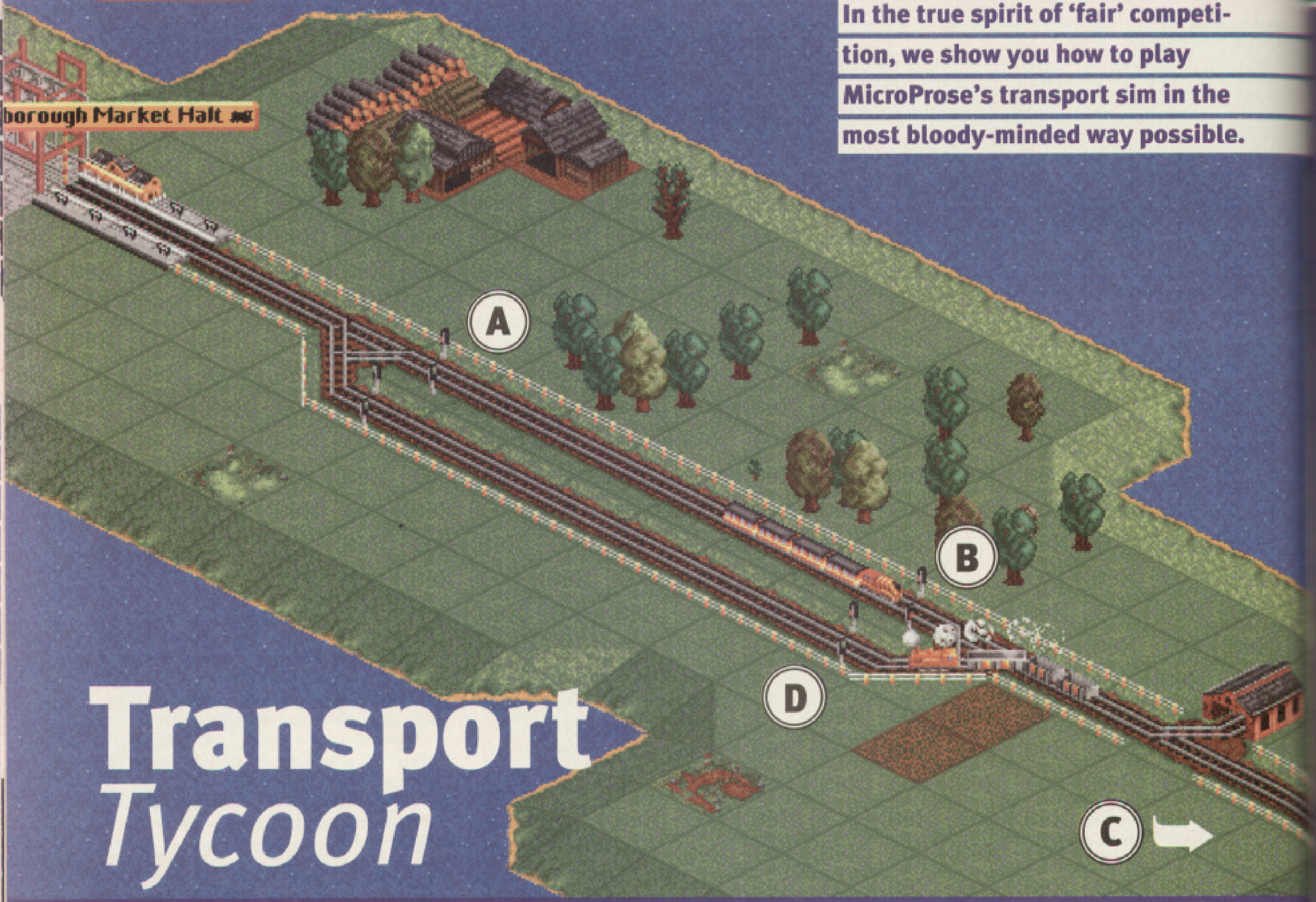
Assuming that you succeeded, sit back and enjoy the brief (but tasty) end sequence... unless you've got Desert Strike on CD-ROM, in which case you've got yet *another* tough mission to tackle before you can relax. But that, as they say, is another story...



Bonus Objective One: Find The High-Speed Winch!

The high-speed winch can be found at the location shown in the oil fields. Pick it up when it's safe to do so, after destroying all the ZSUs.

In the true spirit of 'fair' competition, we show you how to play MicroProse's transport sim in the most bloody-minded way possible.



Transport *Tycoon*

Transport Tycoon is a lovely game. Absolutely lovely. I could spend hours sitting in front of it, watching my little trains, planes and lorries shuttling goods and passengers from A to B. Whooo, whooo... chuff, chuff, chuff. But Transport Tyccon isn't just a pretty software toy. It's a serious, in-depth strategy game and when you're playing against seven ruthless computer-controlled companies, things can get very tough indeed.

But before you sit back and listen to the PC GAMES 'How To Nobble Your Competitors' lecture, let's run through some of the basics. Now, we're not going to bore you by telling you to how to build a link between a coal mine and a power station, or that trains make much more profit than lorries (yawn). No, we're going to concentrate on the *important* facets of vehicular management — the transport nitty-gritty... How do you get two trains (or more) on the same stretch of track without causing an almighty pile up? and how on earth do the signals work?

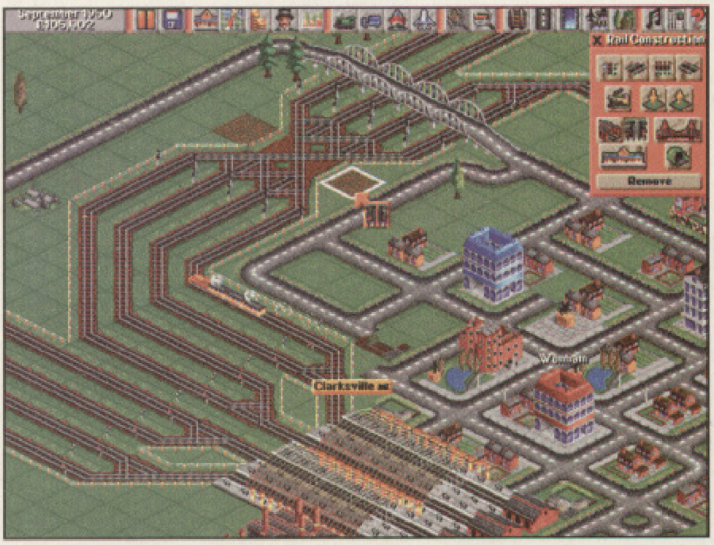
Well, what you need to make a proper railway are sections of track where the trains can pass each other. The easiest design to use is the one shown above. Make sure you construct all four sets of signals, and that the distance between them is great enough for your longest train to fit comfortably in-between.

Here's how it works. The first train will pass the first signal (A), then come to a halt if there is another train between signal (B) and signal (C). The second train will automatically switch on to the free stretch of track via signal (D) if there is a train waiting at (B). The extra sections of track by the signals are to allow the trains to reverse if they have to wait for any length of time, due to a pile-up on the line ahead.

Using this method will let you get two, three or even four trains running on the same line at the same time. Put too many trains on though, and you'll cause a big snarl up. Of course, you can make the whole arrangement as complicated as you like — it won't necessarily work, of course, (see the picture on the right) but it will look damned impressive.

As far as choosing which type of vehicles to concentrate on, that's entirely up to you. Trains are probably your best bet early on. Lorries and buses bring in small but regular profits (especially in the bigger towns), ships are too slow if you want instant gratification, and planes are expensive and somewhat risky.

In the long run, however, passenger trains, goods trains and airports are your most profitable options, so pick a couple of small towns at the start of the game, slap a station right in the middle of each one, then invest in developing those towns as quickly as possible. The rest is pure business...



Keep your roads and your railway lines as level as possible, otherwise your vehicles will really struggle up hills.

Dirty tricks

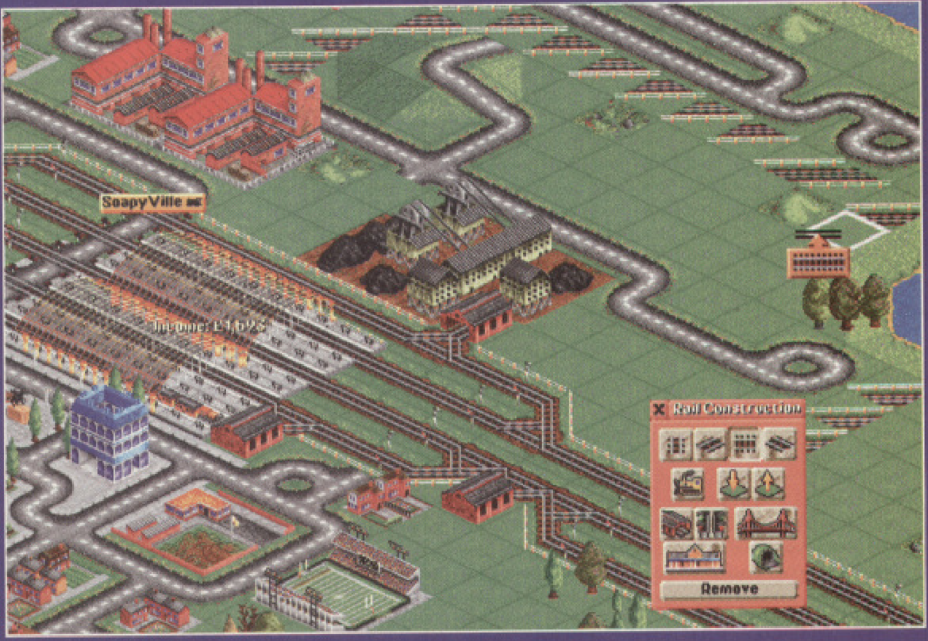
Transport Tycoon is a nice game, a pretty game. A game about trees and fields and the golden age of steam — and all that cobblers. But who cares about all that? Sheer bloody-mindedness and rival-bashing brings its own rewards. No matter what people say, nothing comes to those who wait. Be a complete git in Transport Tycoon and you'll win. Let PC GAMES show you how...

1. *Defend* your industries

If you've got a profitable little number on the go, say a high-production coal mine, the last thing you want is for your rivals to stick a depot next to it and start taking chunks out of 'your' mine. So you protect it, by putting down a perimeter of diagonal rail tracks.

Yes it looks stupid, but your rivals can't demolish or bridge over these diagonal sections, so they can't get at your property, and you can always reclaim the tracks later if you need some spare cash.

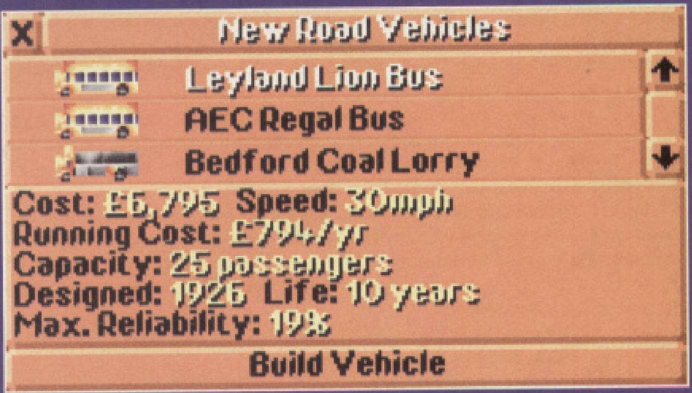
You can go on the offensive too. Be as obstructive as possible. If you see chunks of land being reshaped slap track quickly around the area, thus ruining the extensive development planned by your opponent.



Chondinghattan East

2. *Screw up* the system.

If one of your rivals has an extensive bus or lorry network operating in a city, click on the town name and select 'fund road reconstruction'. This will cause chaos to all road traffic in the area for six months.



New Road Vehicles

Leyland Lion Bus
AEC Regal Bus
Bedford Coal Lorry

Cost: £6,795 Speed: 30mph
Running Cost: £794/yr
Capacity: 25 passengers
Designed: 1926 Life: 10 years
Max. Reliability: 19%

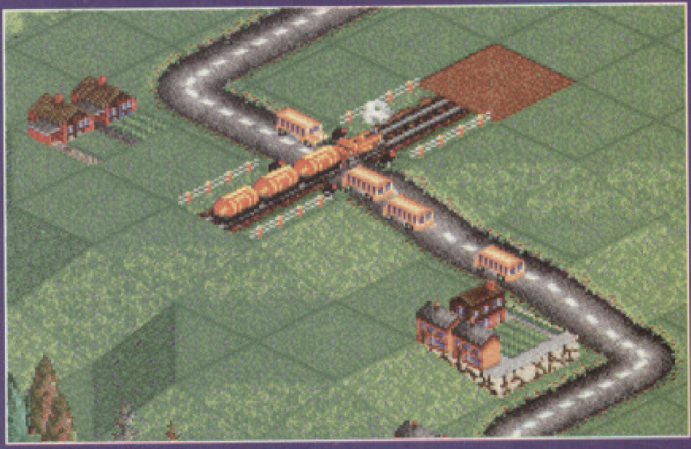
Build Vehicle

3. *The* knackers yard

Buy up lots of old road vehicles with a low reliability rating and set them trundling along your rivals' most profitable roads. They'll break down continually and cause a big traffic snarl up.

4. *Ramming* speed

If you've got some spare cash, why not try to take out road vehicles by building lots of express train routes across your opponents' busy roads. The trains survive any spectacular crashes, but sadly the road vehicles, er, don't. If your rival is still in hock up to his elbows, he might find his vehicles difficult to replace.



5. *Totally* pointless

Try this one: build a depot and a short stretch of track, say five squares, across a key road. Send a train out of the depot long enough to block the road, then demolish the depot and any unnecessary track. The irritation factor for your opponent is, well, it's immense.

cheat lab

Once again, PC GAMES drags its technicians out of the cupboard, plugs them in and prepares them to answer your gaming questions. How do you get to the secret Wolfenstein levels in Doom 2? How do you pop your cork in Sam and Max? Read on, dear readers, read on...

Doom 2

Id Software

As you no doubt know by now, Doom 2 is damned difficult. So, if you're still valiantly struggling through the levels, then listen to Roger Peacey from Cheltenham, because he's come up with some playing tips that just might make your Revenant-blasting, Imp-slashing escapades slightly easier. But don't take my word for it. If you missed the Doom 2 guide in the last issue of PC GAMES, why not grab your chaingun and try out of few of the top tips mentioned here.

Obviously, the best thing about Doom 2 is the fact that you have much more firepower. And you're going to need it too, because Doom 2 throws monsters at you left, right and centre. So, let's forget about the weaker creatures (the Chaingun Dude, the Imps, etc) and concentrate on the real bad guys. You see, all you really need to get by in Doom 2 is your trusty chaingun and a talent for dodging.

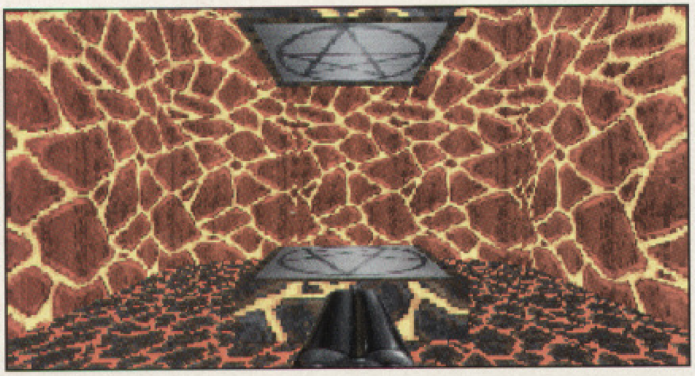
The Arachnotron can be killed easily using the chaingun because while you're firing, the clunky spiders are unable to fire back. However, if they do manage to let off a stream of plasma, they can drain your health very quickly. So, in desperate situations, 2 or 3 rockets will also dispose of these mechanical arachnids.

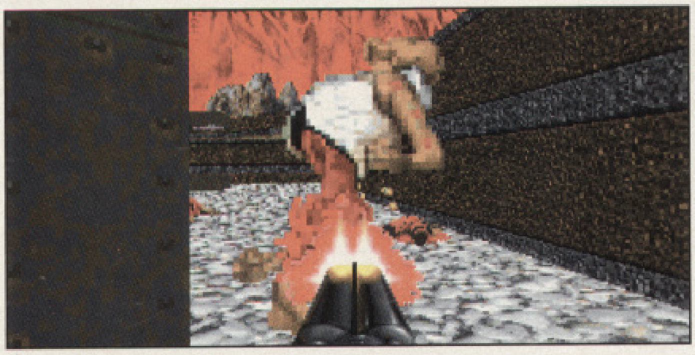
The Revenant is best attacked from behind a wall, so you can dodge their 'Marine-seeking' missiles with relative ease. Again, use your chaingun to dispose of them because, like the Cacodemons and the Arachnotrons, they can't fire back at you while they're being attacked. The Revenant, however, isn't stupid and it will attempt to dodge the bullets, so use the ALT key and the left right cursors to keep it under a constant hail of gunfire.

There's no easy way to kill the Pain Elemental, so grab the biggest gun that you can find and let rip from as far away as possible. As for the Mancubus, be very wary of their fireballs as one is fired straight at you while the other is fired at a slight angle. Use four or five rockets to get rid of them.

The Arch-Vile can only attack you when you are in its line of sight, so if you hear the dreaded crackling noise and see flames rising before your eyes, you've got about three seconds to run away and get out of its view before you explode. It's best to kill the Arch-Vile with three or four rockets, as they seem to be fairly resilient when attacked with plasma weapons.

Lastly, the teleport exit to the secret Wolfenstein levels (see below) is located on Level 15: The Industrial Zone. Happy Dooming...





Pagan: Ultima VIII

Origin

Jan Marc V. Rijswick from Holland wrote in last week to ask for the first part of our Ultima VIII solution. Unfortunately Jean, the solution that appeared in the August issue, was the first and the *only* part of the Ultima VIII guide, and the maps that you hold in your hands are the only maps that we have. However, if you or indeed anyone is struggling through the early stages of Garriott's eighth fantasy masterpiece, then here are a few brief pointers.

After talking to Devon, walk west towards the docks and watch the beheading. Next head north towards the city of Tenebrae. Wander into the palace and try to talk to Mordea's maid who will ask you to meet her later (at Bloodwatch) at her house in East Tenebrae. Don't enter the Armoury or you'll be blasted magically limb-from-limb, but hunt around to see if you can find anything of interest. Also, on the roof of the palace is a square teleportation pad. Walk across this to activate it — the pad will be important later.

In East Tenebrae, leave by the north-eastern exit and follow the path to the cemetery. Enter the large building and talk to the Necromancer, Vividos, who will tell you that he needs a ceremonial dagger. Return to the city and at Bloodwatch (examine any clock to learn the time), go and see the maid. She will give you a key to a cupboard in Mordea's bedroom. Nip back to the palace and when Mordea is NOT in her bedroom, wander in, open the door, open the chest that you find and get the dagger.

Finally, head back to the cemetery and give the dagger to Vividos who will then instruct you on the next part of your quest. Hope this helps, Jean.

Mortal Kombat

Virgin Interactive Entertainment

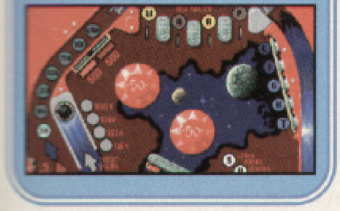
Although beat-'em-ups have never really been very successful on the PC, Robin Hickman from Shrewsbury has unearthed a little cheat for the best of the groin-kicking bunch, Mortal Kombat. On the options screen, hit the F10 key, hold down the CAPS LOCK key and type the word DIP. With any luck and with a following wind, this should bring up a cheat screen that allows you to alter the following variables:

0 — Fatalities
1 — Gore
2 — Music
3 — An advert
4 — Fatalities
5 — Freeplay
6 — Announcer's Voice
7 — No idea whatsoever
8 — Other voices

Pinball Fantasies

21st Century Entertainment

J. Rhonas Frederiksen from Copenhagen has written in with a couple of tips for everybody's favourite pinball game. Now, I still don't know why people don't nip down to the boozer, drink beer and play The Addams Family but, if you're a flipper-tapping devotee, type EARTHQUAKE while the table scrolls up-and-down, to tilt the table as many times as you want.



Formula One Grand Prix

MicroProse

With the greatest F1 racing game of all time now making a welcome appearance on the Powerplus budget label, if you've just discovered this high-octane gem, here's a few words of advice from the balaclava-wearing PC GAMES pit crew. Simply determine which sort of circuit you're racing on (i.e. Hockenheim is Fast, Phoenix is a Street circuit, etc) and adjust your car's set-up to the values below.

FAST SET-UP

Front Wing	25
Rear Wing	20
Brake Balance	02
Tyre Compound	D
Gear Ratios	1st — 25.64; 2nd — 33.64; 3rd — 41.64; 4th — 49.64; 5th — 58.64; 6th — 67.64

MEDIUM SET-UP

Front Wing	40
Rear Wing	40
Brake Balance	00
Tyre Compound	D
Gear Ratios	1st — 24.64; 2nd — 32.64; 3rd — 39.64; 4th — 46.64; 5th — 54.64; 6th — 63.64

STREET SET-UP

Front Wing	60
Rear Wing	55
Brake Balance	02
Tyre Compound	D
Gear Ratios	1st — 23.64; 2nd — 29.64; 3rd — 36.64; 4th — 43.64; 5th — 50.64; 6th — 57.64

Alternatively, you can just stick steadfastly to the MEDIUM set-up and race every race the same. Who wants to be a mechanic anyway? I always wanted to be a train driver...

cheat lab interactive

It's that time again. The bit of the page where we throw caution to the wind and go all* interactive*. So, if you have a gaming problem, if nobody else can help and if you can find it, maybe you should hire... the Cheat Lab. Da, da, da, daaa. Da, da, da...

Dear Cheat Lab,

I'm really stuck in King's Quest VI. I have completed it but I'm missing five points. I haven't used the 'Drink Me' potion yet so I think it might have something to do with that. Please help me.

Tim Winstone,
Southampton.

Ah. Okay, Tim. Even though we've dragged our staff out of the 'Games Guru' cupboard, we're still a bit unsure about where your last five points are. But try this for size... In the middle of the game, when you've teleported to the Isle of Wonder and the Isle of the Mists and the Nightingale has done its thing with the love poem and the note, take the note and read it. Next, return to the Pawn Shop where you'll find the Genie. Drink the potion and watch what happens. Observe the lamp that the Genie disappears into and then trade the tinder-box for the paint brush.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I am stuck on Sam & Max Hit the Road. Please tell me how to take the cork out of the bottle of wine.

Andrew Brown,
Hull.

First of all you need to have found the ice pick which is located in the deep freeze at the Jungle Inn. When you've got this, nip back to the Diner and give it to the weird guy who bends forks, and he'll bend it into a corkscrew. Now, using the corkscrew, remove the cork from the bottle and then... oh, I guess you can work it out for yourself from here.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I am stuck in Lands Of Lore. I can't get past Scotia's barriers in Upper Opinwood and there is a door in the Mines, on level four, that requires two keys to open it which I cannot find. Can you help please?

David Allen,
Norwich.

Sorry, absolutely no idea. Maybe an intrepid Lands Of Lore veteran can help us out here. Please, drop us a line at The Lab.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I've just been given Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis by a friend but I'm stuck on the submarine on the way to Atlantis. What should I be doing. Please help?

Mark Robertson,
Coventry.

Well, Mark, after knocking out the captain of the sub, you must use the Intercom to order all the crew to the bow of the vessel. Next, take the plunger from beneath the head on the bottom level, and use it with the broken depth control lever. Speak to Sophia through the bulkhead and using options 3 and 2, persuade her to distract her Nazi guard. You can then sneak up behind the guard and knock him out. Give Sophia the signal to move by using any conversation line except the one about the fine-leather jackets.

The locking stones have been stashed in the strong box in the room just in front of the Ready Room. Take the mug from the galley and scoop up some of the battery acid that lies on the bottom level. Next use the mug with the strong box and get the stones and the key that are hidden inside. Pick up the bread and the cold cuts and using the controls, guide the sub into the small tunnel that leads to Atlantis. Phew!

Dear Cheat Lab,

I'm stuck in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge. I think I need to get Largo's shirt but I can't get it off him. Someone told me I have to find a laundry ticket but where is it?

Gordon Blacklock,
Edinburgh.

Okay, here goes. To get Largo's shirt you've got to have a bucket filled with mud. There's no immediate connection here, I know, but bear with me... Get the bucket from outside the laundry ship and nip down to the swamp to fill it with mud (USE bucket with MUD). Now go to Largo's room, close the door and then USE the bucket with the door. Finally, hide behind the dressing screen.

When Largo enters, the bucket of mud will fall on his head and he'll storm out in a rage. Follow him to the laundry ship and then return to his room. Close the door and get the laundry ticket that's stuck on the back, and then go back to the laundry ship (again!) to give the ticket to Marty. He'll give you Largo's shirt. Voila!

Stuck in an adventure?
Do you know any hot tips for todays top PC games?

If the answer to either of these questions is "Yes" grab a postcard and send your tips or queries to us at: CHEAT LAB, PC GAMES, Emap Images, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. You never know, you might be lucky enough to win a software prize.

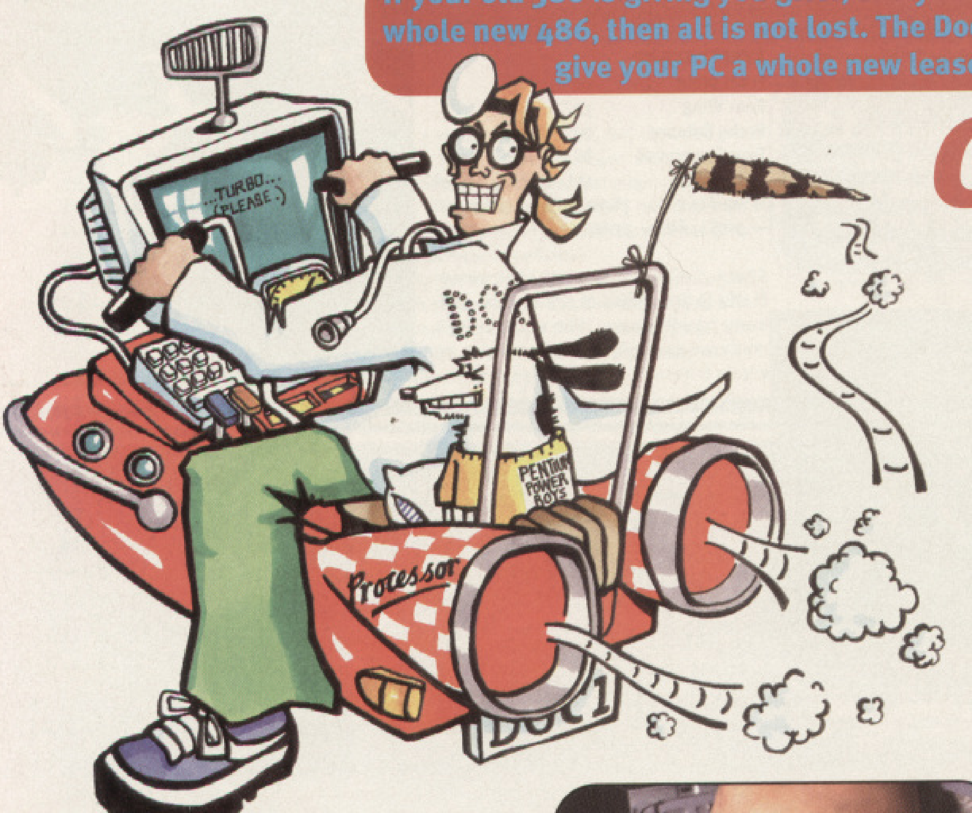
IT'S NOT OUR FAULT!

PC GAMES can not be held responsible for loss of data or for the tips failing to work properly or for anything strange and bizarre that might happen to you and your PC within the next 2,654 years. You use these tips at your own risk. If anything goes wrong it's your fault. Not ours. Just wanted to make that bit clear, okay?

DR SPANNER'S CASEBOOK

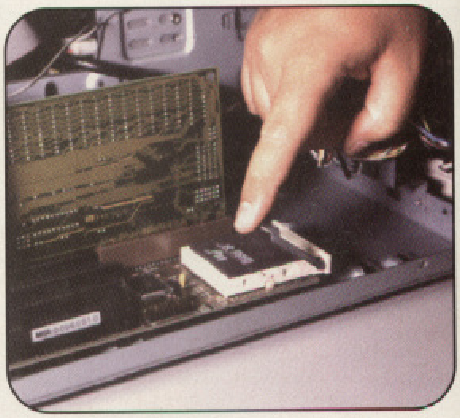
If your old 386 is giving you grief, and you haven't got the cash to splash on a whole new 486, then all is not lost. The Doctor is here to tell you how you can give your PC a whole new lease of life for relatively little money...

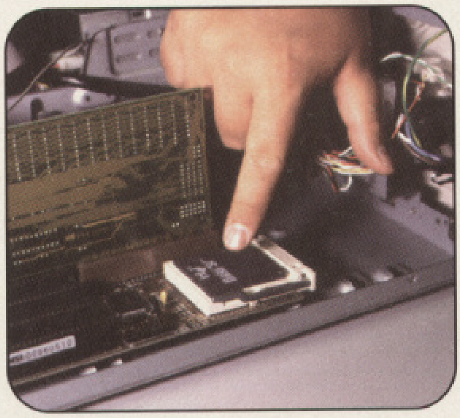
Chips With Everything!



Installing a new processor is actually a pretty straightforward job. If you have a new(ish) PC — preferably one that's been properly made, and not put together with sticky-back plastic and a pair of Val's old knickers by two blokes working in a bedsit above a garage in Walthamstow — it'll have this handy thing called a ZIF (Zero Insertion Force) socket.

This makes putting in a new chip a ten-minute job. If you don't have one, it's still a ten-minute job — but a more risky one. Either way, it's the only thing you can do if you want to give your once-lightning but now-lumbering PC a real power boost. Hey, trust me, I'm a doctor.





The Step-By-Step Stuff

(1) Here we go again: stripping the lid off your PC. First, turn off the PC. Now, find the three or four Philips screws on the back of the case, undo them and put them somewhere where you are guarenteed to lose them/small children or animals will swallow them... (actually no, don't do that).

Now slide or lift off the case and behold the cluttered jumble that is the inside of your PC. Now find the processor (see our ever helpful and not out-of-focus or dark at all photograph). It's the big grey-brown chip-like thingy, usually with something like Intel 486 written on it.

Now, before touching anything like a processor or the circuit board, discharge any static you may have picked up by touching an unpainted part of the metal casing. Remember: A static electricity charge can kill a chip dead.

Now take another look at the chip. Does the chip have a ZIF socket? It's the beige-y plastic base underneath the CPU, with the metal lever down the side of it. If it does, then go to Step 2. If not, then go to Step 5.

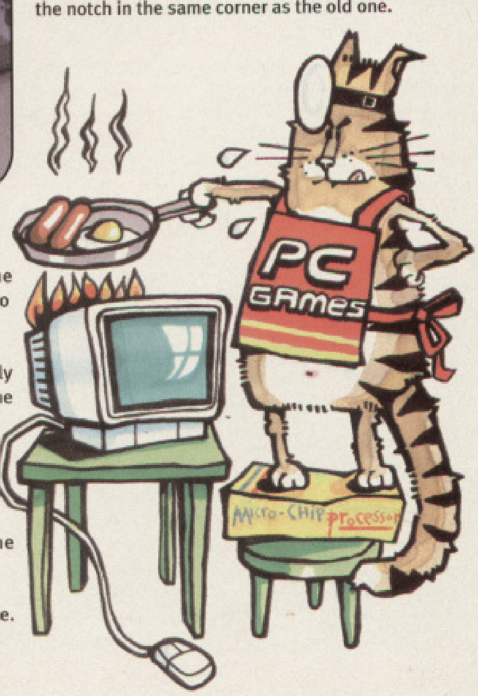
(2) The ZIF socket has a lever on one side. Gently unclip this lever and pull it upwards. This will push the chip lose from its mounting. Each chip has a notch on one corner — make a note of where it is on this one, then carefully lift the chip out and put it somewhere safe.

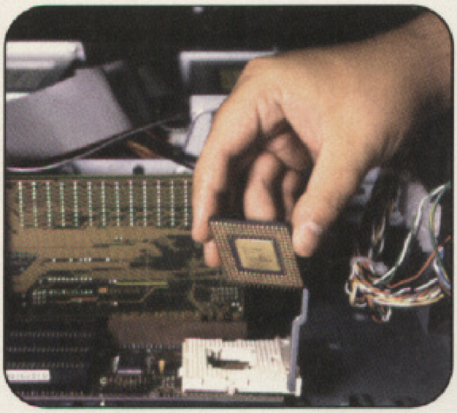
(3) Put the new chip into the socket, with the notched corner in the same position as the old one.

(4) Lower the lever until the chip is locked in place. Now go to Step 6...

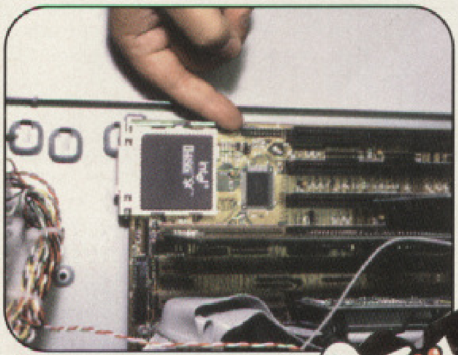
(5) If you don't have a ZIF socket, then you just have to be a bit more careful. You can get specialist chip extractors, but to be honest I usually just use a scalpel to lever the chip out. You must make sure you do this evenly or you'll bust the pins and screw up the entire motherboard. You have been warned!

Again, make sure you position the new chip with the notch in the same corner as the old one.





(6) Right, almost done. The chip's in place, now all you have to do is sort out a couple of jumpers. Yes, jumpers. Jumpers are these pointless on/off pins on the motherboard that serve no purpose other than to annoy you. Everything they do could be done by software but, oh-no, that would be too easy wouldn't it, you amiable bar steward PC manufacturers?



Anyway (phew! — rant over) what you have to do is find your motherboard manual — you know, the one you lost years ago — and it'll tell you which jumpers you have to switch to change the clock speed of your PC. Admittedly, changing jumpers just involves moving around these tiny little clips, but it's still a right royal pain in the rectum.

(7) Now replace the lid on your PC, put in the screws, turn it on, and cross your fingers. Hopefully, you should now have a super-powered new PC.

What Can Go Wrong?

(1) Everything.

(2) Nearly everything... i.e. it hasn't blown up yet, but it hasn't exactly started working either. Chances are...

(a) You've got the chip aligned the wrong way — start all over again and replace it with the notched corner in the correct position. Doh — why didn't you do this when I told you before!

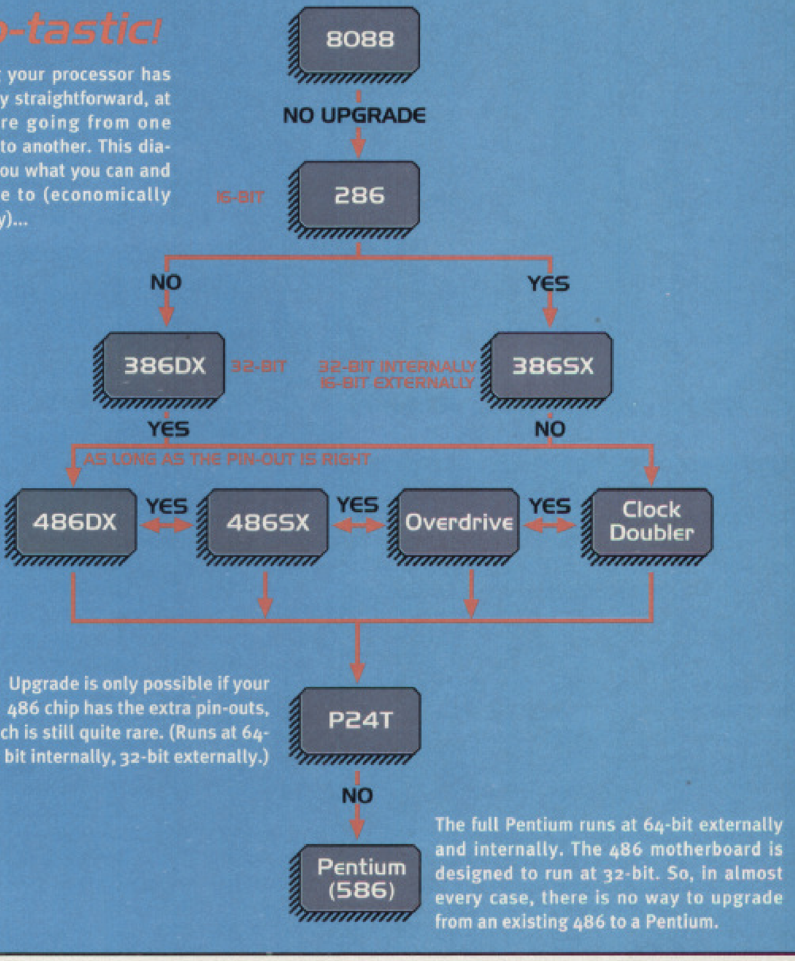
(b) The BIOS doesn't recognise the new chip — go into the CMOS setup and make sure it is registering the correct chip.

(c) Check that you have the jumpers set correctly for the speed of the chip — you may have got the jumper positions reversed.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANT

Chip-tastic!

Upgrading your processor has got reasonably straightforward, at least if you're going from one speed of 486 to another. This diagram shows you what you can and can't upgrade to (economically and practically)...



Upgrade is only possible if your 486 chip has the extra pin-outs, which is still quite rare. (Runs at 64-bit internally, 32-bit externally.)

The full Pentium runs at 64-bit externally and internally. The 486 motherboard is designed to run at 32-bit. So, in almost every case, there is no way to upgrade from an existing 486 to a Pentium.

Load Of Old Cobblers!

Here's a useful statement: "You can upgrade your 486 to a Pentium because the nice man in the shop/advertisement/friend told you it is 'Pentium ready'".

Cobblers, crap, rubbish and double cobblers.

You cannot put a standard Pentium chip in a 486 motherboard. No way, Jose. A Pentium is a 64-bit chip inside and out, so it won't work with a 32-bit motherboard — as in a 486 motherboard.

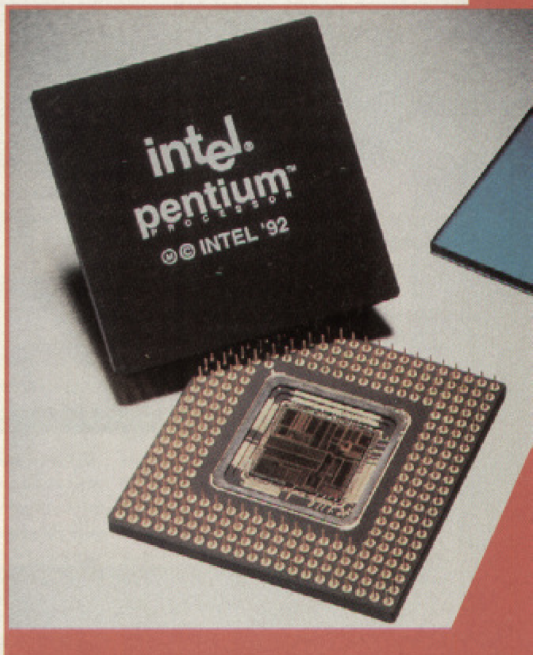
The 'Pentium Ready' sticker simply means that the PC has been certified compatible with the Intel P24T chip (AKA the Pentium Overdrive). Here's the bad news:

(1) The P24T does not even exist yet. Intel will not comment on when (or if) it will surface, either.

(2) The P24T is NOT a full Pentium chip. It's a halfway house between a 486 and a bottom-end Pentium, running at 64-bits internally and 32-bits externally — a sort of crippled Pentium.

(3) The benefits of the P24T upgrade are debatable. If you upgrade from a 486/33 to a P24T, you should see a noticable performance increase. On the other hand, the improvement from a 66MHz 486 would be negligible, and a 486DX/4 is arguably going to be faster than the P24T anyway.

So there you have it. Buy a 486 and that's as far as you can effectively go without replacing the entire motherboard — there is no jump on to the bottom rung of the Pentium ladder, no matter what the salesman tells you. Damn. Looks like you'll have to start saving all those pennies after all...



The name's Erskine. Christina Erskine. And if you've got a technical problem, I've got a not-so- technical solution. That's why they call me...

THE *TROUBLE SHOOTER*

Anxious of Altrincham is the man on Troubleshooter's couch this month, and he's miserable because his mates are kicking sand in his face. **"My PC came with MS-DOS 5.0, and all my friends are laughing at me because they say it's out of date and I should be using MS-DOS 6.2. Should I upgrade?"**

Are there any games that will only work with DOS 6.2?

No. Or at least, none that I know of. Games designed to work with DOS should all run perfectly with DOS 5.0. You see, DOS 6.2 isn't so much a rewrite or an update of DOS itself, as DOS 5 with some accessory programs.

What do you mean by accessories?

Well, DOS 6.2 comes with a virus scanner, a semi-automatic memory manager called MemMaker, a utility called Scandisk which will repair damaged files... oh, and a few other things as well.

Wow — it sounds great... but I've already got a virus checker. Is the MS-DOS one better than the others?

Well, it depends what you've got, and you should bear in mind that Microsoft isn't going to give you monthly or quarterly updates of new viruses. This is the point about DOS 6.2. While it's nice to have the latest version, you may have already got something like Quarterdeck's QEMM to manage your memory and you may already have Norton or PC Tools looking after your data and repairing your disks. If you don't already have this stuff, then an upgrade will be well worth it. If you're happy you are covered for all this extra kit, then it won't make much of a difference.

But surely it would be useful to have all these programs under one roof. It must take up less space?

Er... around eight megabytes once you've installed the lot, actually. No, where it's really useful is that an upgrade from MS-DOS 5.0 to MS-DOS 6.2 will cost you a mere £49 — which is a hell of a lot less than a defragger, or a disk repairer, or a virus scanner on its own. PC Tools for example costs £70+.

Yes, what exactly *is* a 'defragger'? It sounds a bit rude.

Unfortunately, it's a lot less exciting than it sounds. A defragger defragments your hard disk. You see, when you start out with a lovely empty hard disk, all the programs you install fill up the space in order — a nice big block for Ultima VIII, a nice big block for Windows, and so on. Then in time, your disk fills up and you delete things, and then you come to install something and there isn't the space in one big chunk to place it, but lots of little chunks scattered around that make up the required number of megabytes. So the program installs a bit here and a bit there and if your hard drive is badly fragmented it can slow it down. So, to overcome this problem, you 'defrag' it — the defragger sorts it all out and puts all the data back in nice big chunks.

And what about this Scandisk? Is it better than Chkdsk?

Quite a lot better, in fact. It does a whole load more than Chkdsk ever did. Scandisk will look at the whole of your disk, analyse it for all those lost clusters and cross-linked chains that Chkdsk used to mysteriously report, check that the surface of the disk isn't damaged and then repair it all for you. It's good for File Allocation errors — you know, the ones where you do a DIR list and it all comes up wrong, with a whole lot of files listed that you know aren't there, another lot of files missing and some filenames that are just gobbledegook.

Now it's just beginning to sound complicated. Why can't they make DOS easier to use, for God's sake?

Sorry, I got a bit carried away there. I just *love* file allocation errors. But it is easier to use, really. Take MemMaker for example. If you're sitting there with hardly any memory free in RAM and you don't want to start messing about with Config.sys and Autoexec.bat files, all you have to do is type **MEMMAKER**, and it will free up lots of lovely memory all by itself.

So what you're saying is that you just get these extras — there's nothing else that's changed at all.

Well, not quite. Largely that's true, although there are some other memory management and techie things that have been improved upon. But there are two new commands in DOS 6.2 which you might find useful. There's a MOVE command and a DELTREE command.

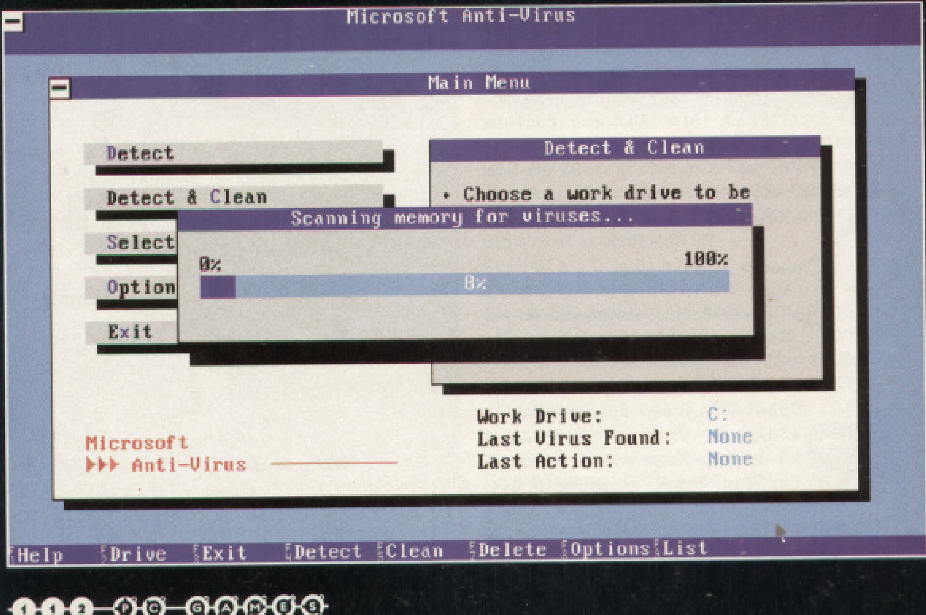
And what do they do?

Well, MOVE is very useful. At the moment, when you want to move a file or set of files from one directory to another, you have to copy the files first, then go back to the old files and delete them, don't you? With DOS 6.2, you type **MOVE [FILENAME] [NEWPLACE]\[FILENAME]**, and it does it in one go. Neat, huh — and long overdue.

DELTREE, on the other hand, is a bit dangerous. Type **DELTREE** and not only do all the files in the current directory get deleted, but all the subdirectories and all the files in all the subdirectories, bam, just like that.

You haven't said anything about Doublespace yet. My friends say I can make my hard disk twice as big with it. That must be worth getting?

I haven't said anything because I'm not crazy about it. Doublespace doesn't change the size of your hard disk. It takes the data on the hard disk and compresses it. When you want to run a program, it decompresses the bits that you need and runs them. It's great in theory, but I know too many people who have trouble getting some games to run with it. Mind you, I also know people who say they've never had any problems and don't know what I'm making such a fuss about. But I wouldn't buy DOS 6.2 just to run Doublespace, I'd buy it for all the other things and use Doublespace if I had to.



• Choose a work drive to be

Scanning memory for viruses...

0% 8% 100%

Work Drive: C:
Last Virus Found: None
Last Action: None

Ah — another poor soul released from torment. If you've got a problem with your PC that needs a spot of troubleshooting, drop me a line and we'll talk it through. And when I'm not being the Troubleshooter, I've got a day job as editor of PC REVIEW, sister magazine to the very wonderful PC GAMES. PC REVIEW covers the whole gamut of PC entertainment and includes a Technical Help section, in which you can find more detailed versions of the articles which appear in this section.

LETTERS

If you've got something to say, then say it to us — you could win £50! Send your letters to: PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively, Fax us on: (0171) 972 6710, or E-mail us at: PCREVIEW@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK.

STARLETTER

VIRTUAL *SEX!*

Dear PC GAMES,

Imp's exactly right when he says that the Net is for no-life saddies [PC GAMES, Issue 5]. The Internet may be a good way of getting information, sending mail or downloading programs, but is it any sort of a way to conduct your social life? I think not.

One of my friends (or should I say, ex-friends) discovered the dubious joys of the Internet a few months back and has been hooked ever since. He seems to think he's a character from a William Gibson novel, though instead of hacking into top-secret government files he spends all his time playing something called "NetSex".

The idea of this (which he related to me on one of the few occasions when he dared to go out with his flesh-and-blood friends, instead of interfacing with his virtual buddies in Cyberspace) is to live out your sexual fantasies over the modem by typing in all the depraved things you'd like to do to the other people who have logged on.

Okay, so virtual sex may be safe sex, but since you can't see who you're chatting up, never mind if they're the gender they claim to be, is it really that good a thing. A user might describe themselves as a six-foot blonde model from Sweden, but they're more likely a spotty 14-year-old schoolboy who's having a laugh at your expense.

I think the people who log on to NetSex and other similar things are actually a bunch of sad geeks who can't get a girlfriend or boyfriend. If that applies to you, then you should get out and meet some real people instead of sitting in front of your computer all day. You may fool yourself into thinking you're hip and trendy because you're up there with the latest technology, but you're actually a tragic individual.

Paul Antonelli,
Stratford, London

£50 WINNER

Yes, it's all a bit sad really, isn't it?

A RED *DWARF FAN WRITES...*

Dear PC GAMES,

After several years of mental torture I feel that it's about time I told the world about my problems and, believe me, I've got quite a few

Having read your letters column, and those of your rival mags, I must say that frankly I'm shocked. Through years of PCing I've read letters from people remembering the "Good Old Days" when the ZX-81 was state-of-the-art. These very same people tell you of great games such as Jet Set Willy and Manic Miner.

This may all sound fine and dandy to you, so what is it that really gets on my wick? Let me tell you in two words: Turbo Esprit. I owned all three games mentioned, yet Turbo Esprit was more fun, more addictive and more satisfying than any other ancient game I remember. I still feel the urge to play it about once a year.

I don't know from whence the game originated, but there must be other saddies out there who feel the same about a game that is never given fair publicity. True, it may be a masterpiece on some satanically biblical scale [eh? — Dave] for its age, due to the ability to squish pedestrians and the odd window cleaner, but this doesn't mean that it should be locked in a dark, smelly cellar to age until nobody remembers it. I do hope you understand my sentiments on this matter.

Thank you for listening.

Martin Green,
Holsworthy, Devon.

Er... no problem, Martin. Do any other readers have fond memories of old, sadly-neglected gaming 'classics' that they feel ought to be brought to the public's attention?

GET *A LIFE!*

Dear PC GAMES,

In replay to Gareth McSorley, who wrote to you complaining about MicroProse's incredible shrinking manuals [PC GAMES, Issue 5], I have only one thing to say: GET A LIFE!

I'm heartily fed up with games which require you to read 500 pages of waffle before you can even start to play, not to mention a degree in astrophysics to understand the technical jargon. What's wrong with just getting straight in there and playing the game?

Fair play to MicroProse, I say. Who wants to sit in their bedroom with their head in a manual when they could be enjoying an evening at the boozer?

Francis James,
Cambridge.

WINDOWS WOES

Dear PC GAMES,

I don't know about any of you, but I'm terrified at the prospect of Windows 95. I recently bought a new 486 PC which had Windows For Workgroups 3.11 pre-installed, and what a nightmare it is! Although I've never liked Windows, I ran a couple of CD games (Gabriel Knight, Myst and Police Quest IV) under my old Windows 3.1 with little trouble. But do they run under Windows For Workgroups? Do they hell! Myst ran slowly and crashed frequently, and I couldn't get any sound out of the Sierra games. The only solution was to delete Windows For Workgroups and install Windows 3.1, and this sorted out all my problems.

What worries me is the chance that Windows 95 will be even more games-unfriendly than Workgroups. I can't imagine that any of my old DOS games is going to work with it, so what happens when I fancy a quick game of Sim City or something even older?

I fear that the world's entire population of PC gamers is going to rush out and buy this monstrous piece of software as soon as it hits the shops, only to find that they'll never be able to play any of their old favourites again — or even use a DOS-based word processor or spreadsheet. I know that DOS is unfriendly, but at least you know where you are with it.

Andrew Wilde,
Chipping Norton.

Don't panic, Andrew — Windows 95 isn't even finished yet and isn't due for release until well into next year, so let's reserve judgement about its 'games friendliness' until then, eh? Admittedly, the news so far isn't particularly encouraging, but it's still early days yet. Rest assured that as soon as it appears we'll give it a full test drive and tell you how it handles.

SHUT IT, *IMP!*

Dear PC GAMES,

In response to Imp's "The Net is for no-life saddies" comment, I have to disagree. I definitely have a life, and go out with my mates or my girlfriend at least twice a week, but I also enjoy talking to people on the Internet.

I've had access to a modem for over a year, and during that time I've made friends with quite a few people in different parts of the world. After leaving university where it's very easy to have a good social life, I've found that it's quite difficult to meet people who have similar interests to you, especially if you live in a small town as I do.

I don't think the Internet threatens communication on a personal level as Imp suggests, because when it comes to talking to my existing friends or my family, I'd sooner do it in person, or via the telephone or a letter, than over a modem. But the Internet is a great place to make new acquaintances because you can join forums which deal with subjects that interest you and exchange ideas with people who share those interests.

I'd also like to add that in March I'm going to America to visit one of my Net friends — someone I'd never have met if it hadn't been for the Internet. Typing in messages might seem a bit impersonal at first, but it can lead to genuine friendships.

John Nicholson,
Banbury, Oxon.

Well, John, Bob Hoskins always says "it's good to talk".

OVER-*RATED?*

Dear PC GAMES,

I've been reading PC GAMES since Issue 1 and have generally found your reviews to be accurate and informative. I was therefore a bit disturbed to find out that in your latest issue (Issue 5) you've given four games (including Monkey Island 2 in the budget section) in excess of 90%. In fact, two of them (Magic Carpet and Little Big Adventure) scored 95% — that means they're 5% short of perfect!

What's going on? Do you play the games thoroughly? And do you really rate them or are you taking bribes from the games companies?

I think you should give some sort of guide to your marking system, so that it's easier to tell what exactly the score means. In some magazines a game has to be absolutely appalling to score less than 70%, while in others 70% is reasonable, and it'd have to get lower than 50% to be considered deficient. I'm feeling very confused about the whole thing.

Geoff Turner,
Birmingham.

Geoff! I'm shocked! Of course we play the games thoroughly — and we most definitely DON'T take bribes from the softies! When we were writing the last issue, we were aware that a lot of the games were scoring very highly. But what could we do? It just happened to be a good month for great games.

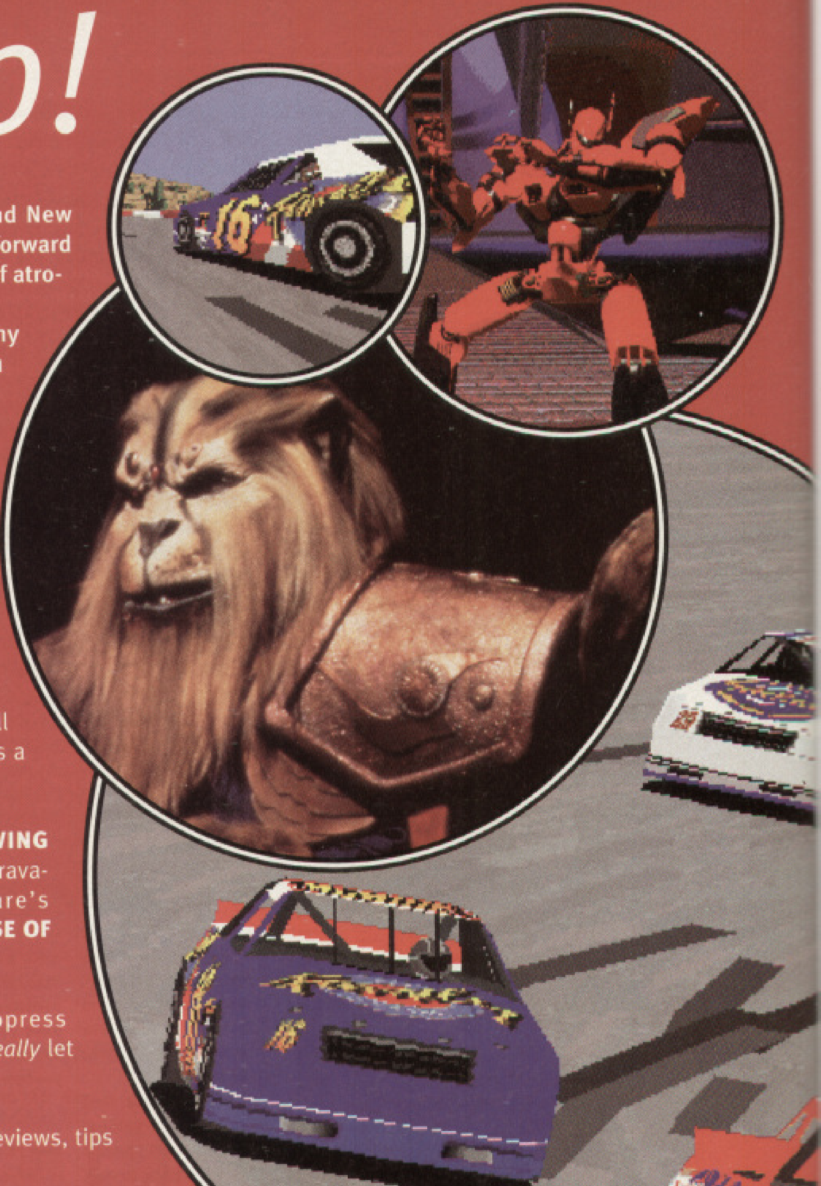
Understanding our scoring system is quite easy, Geoff. Basically 50% is an average, middle-of-the-range mark, indicating a game that's good points are equally balanced but its bad points. Anything getting between 50% and 69% is okay-ish, but has some serious flaws. Anything getting between 70% and 89% is worth considering, especially if you like the type of game in question. Finally, anything that scores 90% or over should be considered an essential purchase. Got it now?

NEXT MONTH

Cheer Up!

Everybody hates that dull time just after Christmas and New Year. Well, it is awful, isn't it? There's nothing to look forward to but endless turkey curries and month after month of atrocious bad weather.

We know this and we sympathise, which is why you should buy the next issue of PC GAMES. You see, we'll help you to get rid of the post-festive malaise by bringing a little bit of summer sunshine back into your lives. How? Here's how...



- **TUBE** — Yes, on the coverdisks and the CD you'll find a COMPLETE GAME written specially for the readers of PC GAMES by Bullfrog, creators of Magic Carpet and Theme Park! It's an exciting, all-action 3D blast that you'd be a fool to miss!

  (And yes, I know we promised you that Tube would be on this issue, and we're sorry. Still, all good things to those who wait — think of it as a late Christmas present.)

- Massive, in-depth reviews of: Origin's **WING COMMANDER 3**, the eagerly-awaited space extravaganza; **NASCAR RACING**, Papyrus Software's superb-looking follow-up to IndyCar Racing; **RISE OF THE ROBOTS**, at *last*; and loads more.

- We'll be taking a long, hard look at Europress Software's games creator **KLIK & PLAY** — will it *really* let you beat the software houses at their own game?

- Plus there will be all the regular great features, previews, tips and other stuff that you've come to know and love.

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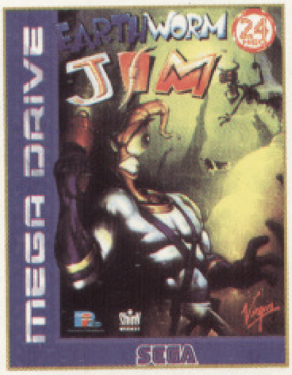
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EARTHWORM JIM
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SEGA

EARTHWORM JIM
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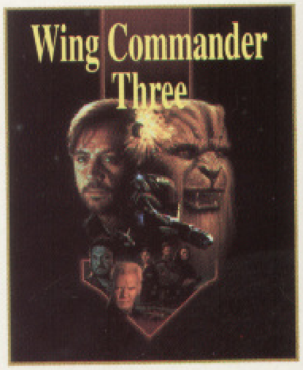
Wing Commander
Three

WING COMMANDER 3*
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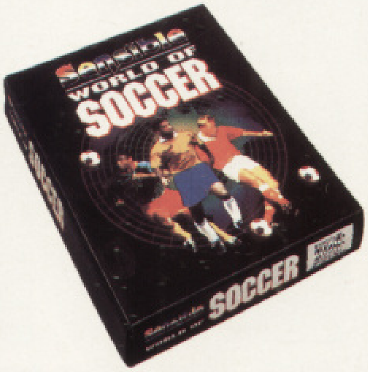
Sensible
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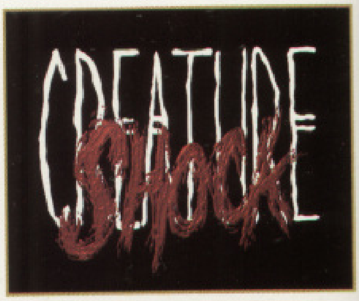
SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER
Amiga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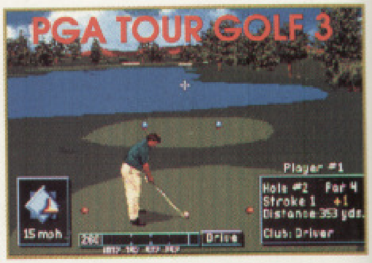
PGA TOUR GOLF 3
Player #1
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Stroke 1 +1
Distance 353 yds.
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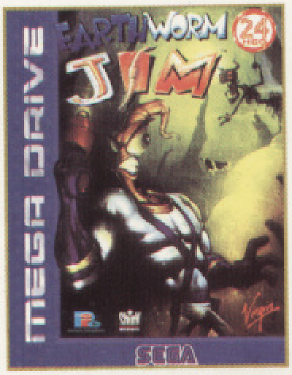
HMV

Everything but silence for Christmas

t night...



MEGA DRIVE
EARTHWORM JIM
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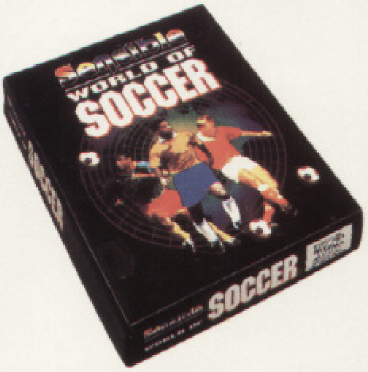
EARTHWORM JIM
MD/SNES

Wing Commander Three

WING COMMANDER 3*
PC CD Rom
(Sleeve may differ from picture shown)



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SOCCER

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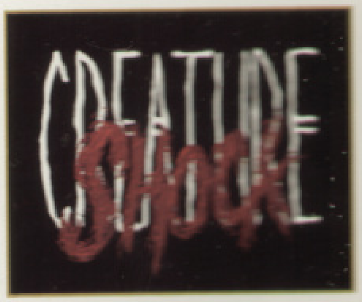

CREATURE SHOCK

CREATURE SHOCK*
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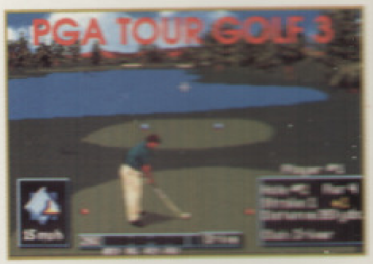

PGA TOUR GOLF 3

PGA TOUR GOLF 3
MD
(Screen Shot)

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